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WE STOOD ALONE

ANDREW

*These were your parents —
this was your country*



Jan and Dorothy Kostanecki dressed for a costume ball at the
British Embassy

WE STOOD ALONE

DOROTHY ADAMS



LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

NEW YORK TORONTO

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WE STOOD ALONE

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DOROTHY ADAMS

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CHAPTER 1

HERBATA! Mleko! Herbata! — “Tea!
Milk! Tea!” . . .

Waking, I looked out on a half-lighted station platform where baskets of geraniums swung in the early morning wind. A boy was holding a tray with glasses up to a man in the next compartment. A man was running down the platform. Then, smoothly, the train pulled out of the station.

There was no more sleep for me, though the day had hardly broken. Since leaving Berlin, I had been wedged upright between seven others in a first-class compartment designed to seat four. All during the night there had been movement in and out of the corridor.

Now as I peered through the window, the train seemed to crawl across a great plain. In the faint morning light bent figures with milk cans tied on their backs, and capes drawn over their heads, scuttled across the fields. Was this the way milk reached the cities? The grey sky and greyer landscape, dark figures and the mournful cries brought tears to my eyes. Foolish to feel sentimental about a people you did not and could not know. Yet over and over went the words in rhythm to the wheels on the rails: “The Poles are bowed down by woes . . . the Polish woes.”

However, this melancholy dispersed when the sun came out and we arrived in Warsaw. The station was gaily decorated for the arrival of the League of Nations Association’s delegates, with whom I was traveling. A red carpet had been laid down for us. We were shown into the first-class waiting room, a little red plush Victorian drawing room with sofas and chairs and palm trees, where someone was making a wel-

coming speech in French. But this first-class waiting room was like an oasis. In the stampede just outside, enormous bags like steamer trunks, huge bales of blankets and hampers were pushed and tumbled. Here were more bearded and befrocked Jews than I had ever seen in my life, and peasant women, their arms filled with baskets and babies, trailing lines of children.

The elegant little station building might have made a suitable background for the leisurely Victorian ladies in their ruffles and satins when it was built in 1880. Now, like the train on which we had come from Berlin, it was utterly inadequate to the throng of desperately poor returning refugees. A whole population was straining through this little doorway to return and rebuild Poland. More than three-quarter million Jews had come from Russia alone.

There had been no reserved places on the train for the hundred or more delegates to the League of Nations Conference, of which I was a member. In the first-class carriages, as in the third, we exchanged seats with those who stood all night in the corridor. This was in 1925. Only five years before, the Bolsheviks had been camped in the very suburbs of Warsaw. Hardly had the Germans been thrown out of Poland by the Polish Legions than the Russian Communists had invaded her from the east. The weary Legions re-crossed Poland on foot, over roads mostly destroyed during the first World War. The ammunition sent by the Allies was held up by the Germans in Danzig, and by the Czechs who seized Cieszyn; still the Legions had defeated the Bolsheviks at bayonet point. Though the Russians had fled out of old Poland, foreign pressure had forced the Poles to make a treaty favorable to Russia, which ran the new frontier through the center of the eastern provinces of old Poland.

However, all Poles were anxious for peace, for the opportunity to rebuild their destroyed country. Proud of their regained country, the Polish League of Nations Society was one of the earliest to invite other League of Nations Associations to an international conference. My first job on leaving college was to attend this conference for the League of Nations

Committee. Since my parents would not let me go so far alone, I was accompanied by a childhood friend from Boston. She was my own age and spoke no better ~~French nor German~~ than I. Together we arrived in Warsaw, and were sent off by the reception committee in an old Model T Ford to the Bristol Hotel, where one of the finest rooms had been reserved for us.

It looked more like a drawing room than a bedroom, with windows to the floor, consoles and gold framed mirrors, crimson damask curtains, and Gothic brass bedsteads (discreetly hidden) which stood in an alcove. We were soon to take a violent dislike to all this elegance however. When we awakened from a short nap we found our arms peppered with ugly red lumps. Drawing our clothes about us, we called the concierge. But all the perspiring protestations of the chambermaid and denials of the management could not persuade us that fleas were to be found only in the south, and that we must have been bitten on the train. I now imagine that we were suffering from hives, but at the time, with my typically American imagination, I was sure that the place was infested with bugs. The crimson welts were a week in disappearing, and during that hot week of conferences and gala balls we had to wear long sleeves or long white leather gloves!

Between Conference meetings we tried to buy something which seemed to us characteristic of Poland. Our treasure hunts were always unsuccessful. We found poor little food shops, or candle kerosene shops, or perfumery shops where the few bottles of French perfumes and soaps were obviously window decoration. But on every street were various junk shops. I was told one could find marvelous treasures in them, but I shuddered at the moth-eaten fur coats and the dirty Oriental rugs heaped in the windows, and never crossed their sills. Women like those I had seen from the train window came barefoot through the streets, carrying a live hen, a few eggs, or milk on their back. No one wore hats. Those who were shod, wore heavy boots and coarse stockings. Most of the women were wrapped in steamer rugs from head to foot.

We were taken to see the Royal palaces in which Napoleon

had stayed, now arranged as museums. Other Eighteenth Century palaces were used for offices, law courts and ministries. I looked in vain for the signs of tremendous and unequal wealth of which I had so often heard. Everyone seemed equally poor, the only difference being that there were the educated poor and the uneducated poor. The many houses that were opened to us seemed all equally shabby. None had been painted or refurbished since 1914. Wherever we went, even the highest nobility served only tea with dried little cakes. Yet everywhere it was evident that we were received with a great effort at being hospitable.

When we left for Cracow, roses were brought us to the station. Little did I guess that those forlorn flowers, which I threw out of the window as soon as the train started, cost more than five dollars — in a country which had no luxuries.

The trip down to Cracow was very comfortable. Special sleepers had been reserved for us, and the whole train moved smoothly over the vast plain. The little hotel where we stayed was clean and simple. In Cracow we felt we had come back into Europe. Obviously here were privately owned houses, here were villas set in gardens. Oleanders in tubs stood by open doorways which gave a glimpse of well-watered courtyards, cool and inviting. In many an open window birds were singing. None of the houses had bullet holes. The streets, though paved in rough cobblestone, had not recently been torn up for barricades. Well-dressed people sauntered on the streets. Maids in uniform and children in peasant costume were actually strolling in the parks. No one was scurrying and scuttling and it was plain that war had not come so close to Cracow as to harried Warsaw.

As there were no conferences, the whole time was devoted to sight-seeing and receptions. On the first afternoon we were taken to a large private palace. It seemed very dank and gloomy that sunny July day. On the tennis courts musicians were playing, and a few people were dancing. As my friend and I were the only youthful delegates, we had many invitations from partners varying in age and obesity. But a few hops and skips on the hard cement court made the

precarious chairs and teetering little tables under the trees seem very attractive. Two young Poles introduced themselves and found us a secluded spot. They asked why we had come, admired our courage at dancing with the delegates, and laughed at our earnestness. They asked for our home addresses with violent protestations that they would never forget us. They would surely see us again, even if they had to cross the ocean to do so ! When we returned to the hotel we read over the names : Zbygniew Grabski, Warsaw ; Jan Kostanecki, Cracow.

Each had the finely knit six foot physique, noble features and bubbling gaiety of the romantic Pole. We were both delighted with the commotion our dashing cavaliers created about us on the lengthy sight-seeing tours, the pompous lectures at the picture galleries, and heavy dinners given by the city dignitaries. Jan Kostanecki was always by my side. He would ferret out some obscure painting in a far end of a gallery and make it stand out in place and history comparing it to similar pictured scenes in other European galleries as if he had had the catalogue in hand. Painters of whose existence I had not dreamed were to him the indispensable links in the development of different styles. He never spoke in general terms of Roman, Gothic or Baroque architecture. He classified the various buildings, subdividing them into sects and schools from various cities. He was also passionately fond of music, and at the concert of Polish Seventeenth Century Chamber Music he showed a musician's knowledge of the pre-Bach relationship between England and the continent. He would pick out the various motifs in the themes and place their antecedents. When our party had to leave by an earlier train for Prague, I felt sad not to have said good-bye to him. With all his erudition, he had made me feel at home in Cracow.

As guests of the Czech Foreign Office, we spent three days in Prague where we were taken to meet both Benès and Masaryk and shown about the city. I had made many friends among the English delegates, including Mr. Wilson Harris, now editor of *The Spectator*, Mr. Philip Noel Baker

and Lady Asquith. On the long train ride to Geneva, they urged me to come to England and write about the Polish-German-Silesian boundary. That I knew nothing in the world about it, nor even exactly where it was, did not in their eyes seem the major obstacle that it did to me, nor indeed the fact that I was employed by the League of Nations Non-Partisan Association in Baltimore. "You should do it," they urged, "you can easily take a year's leave of absence." So it was arranged. Mr. Hugh Dalton, then Economic Advisor to the Foreign Office and now Minister of Economic Warfare, would see to it that I met Mr. Bourdillon.

Mr Bourdillon was the British member of the international commission made up of a French and an Italian general together with their respective staffs, for the Silesian Plebiscite. The new Polish frontier had not been established by the ethnological maps of Imperial Germany showing the Polish pre-war population, but at the insistence of the Germans at Versailles, the boundary had been settled by Plebiscite. Even after the Plebiscite had shown a Polish majority, the German claims had been given scrupulous consideration and only one-third of the province was allotted to Poland. In all the victorious Allied countries, much had been written in Germany's favor. Lloyd George, for instance, found it preposterous that the rich Silesian coal fields should be given to Poland "Poland is too poor a country to develop such resources," he had said, "whereas Germany is too great a nation to be crippled for lack of raw products"

"The Poles would be better off buying good German products with their farm produce," I was told by men in authority.

All writers seemed to agree that the Germans would surely sell coal to Poland who could never be trusted to mine it for herself.

All modern German statistical data tried to prove that Silesian coal was of a special quality indispensable to the development of their metallurgical industry. It required no knowledge of statistics to realize that if coal were needed at home, the Germans could not export it. Yet statistics from 1900 to 1914 showed this very coal was used as the basis of

pre-war barter with Russia for foodstuffs essential for feeding Germany. By a strange coincidence, I found the same figure used in different books to prove these two opposing contentions. Only then did I realize I was totally unprepared to undertake such a serious study. I therefore decided to spend the winter of 1926 at the London School of Economics and take a post-graduate course in Statistics and International Law. Mr. Philip Noel Baker was to be my tutor.

Besides classes at the London School of Economics, I worked at the Royal Institute of International Relations where I had access to the unpublished documents of the British Commission to Upper Silesia. I was allowed to take no notes. Every little while I would run out into St James Square to jot down what I had just read. As I had spent the summer in Geneva, studying the League of Nations reports, I had already a bewildering collection of contradictory figures.

An International Boundary Commission had divided the Silesian province giving Germany 75% of the territory although in the Plebiscite the Germans had barely 54% majority in the towns and had conceded all farm lands to the Poles. The Commission based its decision on the fact that during the 19th Century, German capital had developed this area, bringing engineers, tradespeople, and capitalists, into this wholly Polish province. The new Polish-German boundary left one German on the Polish side of the frontier for two Poles on the German, the Commission believing that it was a greater hardship for Germans to live in Poland than for Poles to live in Germany.

Many of my acquaintances and, among them members of the British press, were of the opinion that the whole province should have been given to Germany. They would tell me "It's undignified to imagine a German working for a Pole," or "What chances have the Poles of mining their own coal without German experts, or German capital or German machinery?"

"After all, the Poles are really barbarians!"

Hearing so much adverse criticism of the Poles, I began to

think so myself. I forgot about the law, stringently enforced after the time of Bismarck, prohibiting Poles from investing their money in anything except farming and agriculture, which had kept Polish capital out of Silesia. I had seen milk brought to town on the backs of women, I had seen the shabbiness of Warsaw.

Foreign students at the London School of Economics had a club where reference books were kept and where they met after lectures. There were Indian and Chinese, Polish and Dutch, German and French students, and quite a few Americans. As soon as the German students learned what I was doing, they invited me for lunch, to talk over my work. They had no doubt the Province should be returned to Germany. It was a "spiritual insult" for a great nation to be humbled before a little one. They took hours of my time explaining the racial inferiority of the Poles and they ended with the saying : "You'll have to restore the German Colonies. You can't keep a great nation in chains "

The Poles had no ready-made slogans nor arguments, but they were willing to help me look through the great books of statistics published by the Germans from 1910 to 1917. They discarded the propaganda pamphlets the Germans had given me and searched for the figures the Germans had quoted. Strangely I found more coal was mined under the new Polish management than had been mined under the old German concerns.

"Why don't you Poles do something to make counter-propaganda ?" I asked. "Why do you let the Germans take the initiative ? Why don't you publish these facts and tell the world ?"

"Money spent on propaganda is wasted," was the reply. "In the long run, truth will tell, and in the meantime there is too much else to be done."

"What a ridiculous idea !" I said , "Germany by capturing world opinion will control the world."

"Do you believe," they asked, "that once Germany invaded Poland, however strongly Americans might feel on the moral issues, that they would attempt to stop the Germans ?"

I knew that these Polish students were right, yet I still felt it a pity that somehow the American public should be unaware of the fact that while the Germans were building up their case against the smaller nations, the smaller nations were too poor to spend the money necessary to present their case.

During the fall term the foreign students drove down to Kent for a long week-end. In the bus one of the Poles sat down beside me. I went back over our conversation of the preceding days about the return of Upper Silesia to Germany.

"The real issue is," I said, "can the Poles run a modern industrial democratic country?" He did not reply and I went over the evidence I had collected. Finally he burst out with :

"What you say ultimately boils down to your belief in German racial superiority. You would sacrifice Polish people and all the natural resources of Silesia to satisfy German megalomania."

"In the best interest of the greatest number of people, the Poles should choose a middle ground"

"There is no middle ground!" he protested angrily. "Either you side with Germany or following the Fourteen Points you let the Poles re-unite."

We both sat silently until he said : "Don't you remember me? I met you in Cracow. My name is John Kostanecki."

Since leaving Poland I had deliberately forgotten him. I was determined to write a just and unbiased thesis in the "broader interests of Science." I had put away as sentimental and emotional that instantaneous sympathy I had felt for Poland. In order to be fair, I had erased all feelings of friendship with Poles. When we met six months later, the memory of John had become so faint I could not have told his name. I had made it a business to eat with the German students and ask their help in my work. Yet John had a magnetic quality that compelled me to watch every move that he made. His presence in our commons was so distracting, I had been unable to concentrate on my studies. Though his clothes were used and threadbare, they were

always neatly pressed and brushed. His shoes were always cleaned, his shirt was spotless and his immaculate grooming was in the greatest contrast to the other tousled students. Now, even in the cold jolting bus I felt the net of enchantment slipping over me like a heavy, suffocating drug.

In a flash of self-recognition, I realized I had identified John with Poland and my obstinate refusal to understand the Polish point of view was a reflection of my fear of understanding John. This silenced me, and I was frightened. I vowed to myself I would never be alone with him again, and during the rest of the trip I managed to chat only with the others.

Yet that night after dinner, while we were all about the fire, John drew his chair beside me. In some mysterious way, we felt we were friends. First we discussed books, then paintings, then architecture — all the world of abstractions that lay dazzling before us. We became utterly absorbed in our discovery of each other, which drew us on as one races through the chapter headings of a new and fascinating book one is about to read. The joy of finding each other was so intoxicating that we had forgotten the time. We had not noticed that the others had, one by one, drifted away and were probably long since asleep. We were busily discussing the earlier form of the little Celtic church nearby, and the changes that hid its original structure. John was saying: "You see, the narthex was incorporated into the façade, it has a primitive rotunda. If you will stay after church I will show you. The Saxon font is one of the finest in England."

"Stay after church! Heavens!" I looked at my watch. It was 2:00 A.M. I left at once, fearing how he would interpret my staying so late, frightened at talking half the night to the very person I was determined to avoid. I reproached myself for weakly becoming infatuated. What an impossible situation to fall in love with a Pole! Like a rabbit caught in a trap! But all my efforts of will could not keep snatches of the evening's conversation from spinning around in my head. There was little sleep for me.

"This will never do," I thought, "tomorrow I won't stay after church."

At breakfast, armored with stern resolve, I did not look up as the other students, one by one, came into the dining room, for fear that if it were John, he would at once understand my struggle. Yet as each person came in my heart stood still, waiting for the now familiar throaty voice. Months afterwards, he told me he was late because he had gone to ask his great friend Tony about my family. John knew even then he would marry me.

During the day we took a long walk. The day had the chill damp of the late autumn. John had his sketching box, and while he drew, I lay on his Burberry which he spread on a flat stone for me and watched the never ending clouds moving across the faint blue sky. At last John put up his water colors. His hands were cold. He recited the little song :

*"My hands are cold and nobody loves me,
Sit on your hands for God loves you."*

Then he plunged into a long ramble about when he was a child in Cracow his mother had made him go to Dancing School in a white sailor suit and how he disliked it.

I listened entranced. Those were the very years when with tears of protest I too had gone to Dancing School in a stiff linen sailor suit at the Hotel Somerset. I could hear my mother saying . "A sailor suit looks neater on a plump girl like you " Yet how I longed to hide under a frilly dress with bows and sashes, to wear ringlets like the other little girls in my class at Miss Windsor's School. They might have helped efface my earliest memory. I was sitting on the floor under the library table. My parents were reading aloud the life of Madame Brzeszkowska, and how she suffered chained to a wheelbarrow in Siberia.

Her story awakened a deep feeling of pity which during all of my childhood burned deeper into my heart. I would flood my pillow at night over the trials of some poor immigrant family I had known in my father's settlement house, or the account of a Jewish pogrom in Russia, or the news of the poor Serbians dying in their mountain fastness, or the plight of strikers in the desolate mill towns around Boston. As I

grew older the happiest moments I can remember were those insignificant services I was asked to perform for the poor mothers who came to Osterville where my father directed a summer settlement house.

My father had given up a promising literary career to direct Lincoln House in Boston. My parents' attention was wholly centered upon the daily problems of this settlement house, raising money to buy coal or food for some destitute family, and all the regular work of a big community house. Unlike my classmates I went to few parties or dances and mostly wore made-over clothes. Even my reading was different. On our shelves, side by side with current sociological writers, the most recent novels were those of Hardy or Meredith. When in secret I borrowed the *Forsyte Saga*, my father warned me that I was following the footsteps of "The Scarlet Woman." We read only the Classics. At nine I was given *Pendennis*, and the lightest girlhood fiction was Louisa May Alcott.

It grew dark as we returned along the Kentish lane. The others were already waiting for us in the car. During the drive up to London, we continued comparing our childhoods. We had suffered the same childish miseries and enthusiasms. Neither of us felt a part of the well-established social scheme in which we had been brought up, John in peaceful, sheltered Cracow, and I in Boston, each dressed in linen sailor suits, each detesting the dancing schools and children's birthday parties which we were forced to attend, each having the feeling, if only vaguely, that Fate had other plans for us.

"You can't go on living in Kensington. It's the most deadly part of London," John told me. "When we get back to London, I will find you something in Chelsea where I live."

I heard myself reply: "I'm leaving for the Continent shortly. It would be foolish to move before I leave." When I had said it, I felt better. To leave would be an excellent way of breaking the spell. "Above all," I said to myself, "I must not let myself fall in love with a Pole." Aloud I said, wishing to clinch the matter beyond argument: "I must learn German if I am to finish my work properly."

Back in my room, while undressing for the night, I heard over and over again the conversation we had had and the throaty voice of John. Once more there was no sleep for me. Impatiently, I turned on the light and read.

When I came down to breakfast, a note was by my plate :

"Dear Dorothy :

I will wait for you for lunch, No. 11 Soho , unless I find a message at school you cannot come. I hope Mr. Cranford is not engaged and will join us."

Mr Cranford was my uncle. He had come to London to chaperon me while my parents, who could not face the London climate, spent the winter at Nice. He had seen John several times at the school when he had come to fetch me in the evening.

"No good can come of this, Dotty," he warned. "I believe you are being carried plumb off your feet by this Pole's magnificent physique."

"Has he a magnificent physique?"

"Don't quibble," he said, "I won't be party to this romance."

I told him I had decided to leave London and go to Germany to study the language, and besides, I had a dinner engagement that evening with a Dutch architect.

During the morning, I was unable to get to work. I found myself on the bus an hour too soon. My head swam and the houses went by in a blur. I got out at Regent Street to kill time looking at shop windows. But I found myself looking up in the expectation that John, too, might be coming this way. "I can't go to pieces like this," I said to myself, "where would it lead to?" At the mere thought of becoming a Pole, I grew so distraught I did not see him approaching.

His voice made me start. "What luck finding you here!"

But instead of greeting him I used the most matter-of-fact tone I could muster. "I was looking for a new pocketbook," I explained. "I shall need one for my journey." The silk pocketbooks in the window were quite unsuitable for tickets

or passport. Yet perversely I insisted on entering the shop and keeping him waiting.

During lunch I told him of my plan of going to the University of Heidelberg where I had friends. Since I was to cross Belgium, John persuaded me to spend a week on the way and see the Rubens.

"How can you stand all those mountains of pink fat?" I asked.

"Rubens is a new era," he explained, "a wholly new conception in painting. Wait until you have seen the *Descent from the Cross*. I wish I could show it to you"

After lunch we went to Cook's to leave my passport and make reservation for the train. John knew all the boats to Ostend and decided which one to take. In two days I would be leaving. We walked down the Mall to the National Gallery. There were things in the Flemish Room he wanted to show me. We passed by the Frans Hals and spent the afternoon before the Rembrandts and Rubens. He had also wanted to show me the Chardins, but suddenly it was so late, I had to run to get back and dress to go out to dinner with the Dutch architect.

The last day in London was spent with my uncle. Toward evening a messenger arrived with a bundle of books, a worn Baedeker, catalogues of Museums, and several brochures on special painters. With it was a little note which said, "I will be at the train to say good-bye."

In an effort not to be at the station too soon, I nearly missed the train. It so happened that several of my League of Nations friends were on the platform seeing off Lady Asquith, who was leaving by the same train. They were astonished to see me there.

"I thought you had just come back," they said.

"What, off to Berlin again?" I was too confused to answer.

Lady Asquith pulled my arm. "Do come in my compartment, child, it will be so pleasant not to travel alone."

The train pulled out. We had not said good-bye. John ran by the carriage. "I will write you *Poste Restante* to Brussels and Heidelberg," he called.

Lady Asquith was very kind. She asked me many questions about my studies, but I was too distracted to answer. She tried gently to find out whom I had met in London. "Lady Astor receives on Sunday. Let me know when you return. We must see that you meet the right people."

In Brussels it rained steadily. During the first week I was so depressed I hardly went out. I spent the time working over my notes in the hotel. One day, a telegram came. "Why don't you answer my letters sent Poste Restante?" The telegram sent simply to "Brussels" reached me with hardly any delay due to the system of registration of all visitors with the Police. At the post office, a whole bundle of letters was waiting Poste Restante. I sat down in the nearest bistro and tearing them all open, laid them in sequence on the table. There was hardly any room for the *cassis à l'eau*. John had written every day.

MONDAY. "This has been a marvelous day. A long motor trip to Dartmouth and along the beach to Clapton Sands and back through hilly Devon with the people just dull enough to make me realize the whole thing wasn't a dream. I talked to you as much as possible without being obviously rude to the others, and even much more. You liked particularly a marvelous church in Dartmouth, mixture of Norman and early English with Tudor screens of sculptured, painted gilt oak. Some of the views from the top of the hills were so much like around Cracow that I got quite homesick, a thing I rarely do."

TUESDAY. "I had the first really pleasant morning today lying on the rocks and gazing in the sea. Of course, it wasn't complete. You know why. Out here is really something wonderfully calming in '*les sentiments de la nature*.' I have been lots at the seaside, but parts of the beach here are absolutely the most wonderful thing I have ever seen. I am waiting for your letters with more and more impatience. Tonight I even dreamed of someone getting seasick. Isn't that a nice Freudian dream?"

WEDNESDAY. "I seem to spend days in ups and downs of hope at the arrival of each post. I quite see that I have no right to ask anything of you, but how a letter from you from Brussels would cheer me up."

THURSDAY : "I have never felt as much cut off from the world as I do now. Tomorrow I am going to Exeter in the morning, then London, where I hope to find some mail at Oakley Street. (Do you imagine how my heart beats at the thought) and then I am taking the train via Harwich to Brussels. I hope you will get this in Brussels or else that it will be forwarded to you if you go anywhere in the meantime. I haven't made up my mind yet as to whether meeting you there is a dream or not."

Walking back to the hotel, I wondered what I should do.

This was Friday. John would be arriving that very evening. I wondered how soon he would find me. I went up to my room and re-read his letters again. My room seemed suddenly unspeakably shabby. I found myself shivering with the cold. As I sat on the bed pulling the unyielding red comfortable about me, channels of air blew down my back. I suddenly realized John was the wide open door through which the sun was pouring, the broad sea on which the waves were dancing, the timeless vision of unlimited space. The future without him would be as drab as this little room. I told myself over and over that John couldn't possibly find me that evening, that I should undress and go to sleep as the best way of composing myself. Every time someone walked down the hall, however, I stopped breathing until he had passed my door. Though my head was burning, I was shivering with cold when the night porter wrapped on my door.

"Un monsieur est en bas, mademoiselle descendera ?" With a bound, hardly glancing at my hair, I had grabbed my coat and was running down the old yellowish marble staircase. John was standing at the bottom, covered in his voluminous Burberry.

"When did you arrive ?" I asked inanely.

"A half hour ago. I'm in the hotel across the street," was his smiling reply.

"Then you knew I was here ?" My head was still spinning.

Outside it was drizzling and dark. The ornate pseudo-gothic buildings looked mysterious, softly beautiful in the misty lamplight.

"I have come over to bring you back. You can never leave me again," he said, gently propelling me along the narrow sidewalk as he stepped over the puddles at the curb.

"But I couldn't become a Pole," I protested. "I am too acutely American. I was brought up to be a Unitarian. I fear and distrust your Catholicism, it would suffocate me."

Under the Cathedral, the sidewalk was wide. We paced back and forth, our feet were wet. No one was on the street. I heard myself speak as though it were not my voice.

"No, I could never live in Poland," I was saying. "I would be deeply unhappy in a country in which I would have an underlying contempt for everything and everyone. I know the feeling would grow on me."

John did not reply, but as I spoke, all the poison flowed out of me and I no longer felt so superior. I felt my heart would break. I had tried to run away, I had tried to go back before the day of the drive to Kent. Still I knew my life was as surely bound up with Poland's as on the day when I had first looked out on that station platform in the early morning and felt pity and sadness for that country so grey and flat, so bitterly oppressed.

"I know," I begged, "you will forgive me for all the mean and unkind things I said, because it's true, we can never be parted. There is no decision to be made. It was settled that day we met. And all this running away from myself is childish. I will go back to London."

However, John asked me not to return to London for a few days so that he could show me the museums of Brussels, Antwerp, and Bruges. Though it was as clear to me as it had been to John that we were both caught in the wheel of destiny, on our walks between the galleries, I still struggled to find a way out — torn between my love for him and my fear of becoming Polish, or having Polish children, and finally of dying in a foreign land and being buried under Polish soil.

"I'll have to visit your family first," I said, thinking I had found an excuse to put off the final decision. "They may dislike me. I may take a loathing to them. Having tried being in Poland without you, I can then see whether this is

an infatuation or whether I could really decide to become a Pole."

It was settled that I would go back to London for a month and then as soon as it could be arranged, leave for Cracow to visit John's family.

In March once more I crossed the Channel ; changing trains in Berlin, I took the midnight sleeper for Cracow.

CHAPTER 2

I ARRIVED in Cracow at eleven in the morning. It was an early spring day. In the fields water still stood on the ground and the trees were bare. The shabby workmen's houses were splashed in mud — but so were the better houses along the unpaved streets. I immediately recognized Michael, my brother-in-law to be. As he was quite unsuspecting of all this, I had difficulty in telegraphing John of my safe arrival, before leaving the station. Michael insisted we take a taxi. But I longed to ride in an open carriage under the great bearskin rug which was strapped up against the seats. To him, the *dorozka* was a relic of the past, and not even in the greatest emergency have I ever seen him consent to get into one.

"It's certainly pleasanter to walk," Michael said. "In a *dorozka* you don't gain time over walking."

Riding, I found out, had nothing to do with comfort. It was exclusively a question of getting there faster. Certainly the *dorozka* would have been infinitely more comfortable than the stiff-sprunged Austrian taxi, whose seat of hard stuffed horsehair gave neither purchase, nor comfort as we bounced along the crowded street. We swerved between market carts, each with its one horse attached to a long pole which swung perilously out at the side. With every hurtling jerk, I expected to be speared through, as on a skewer. I thought to myself, "I will never take a taxi from choice!"

Michael cringed when I said, "Oh, how quaint!" pointing out the women in gay flowered shawls, sitting in the straw on those galloping carts. Those peasant carts made him very sad, as did the log cabin model tenements we were passing.

Michael explained to me, "They were built two years ago

in that ridiculous style to house refugees from Russia. Other building material would actually have been cheaper, but the arts and crafts movement uses outward forms of an authentic style in an unauthentic manner."

Nevertheless, I found the houses very attractive. They were built for two families, and set irregularly in the lots to give larger gardens about them. I saw nothing wrong in making log houses in the suburbs of a city. But within ten years they became obsolete and were replaced by modern apartments. They are the only houses I know of which did become obsolete, in a country too poor to tear down anything because of faulty construction or a poor plan.

"That's our house," Michael said, as we turned a corner. It was a Colonial house with a large two-storied portico of columns, and a high plastered wall hiding the garden within. As we drove up, the door flew open, dogs and servants came running out, while on the steps the Professor and his wife waited in smiling expectation. My hands were kissed, my bag grasped by an old woman who, to my horror, picked up the heaviest one and ran upstairs with it.

"Was your journey comfortable? Did you recognize Michael at once? Lunch will be served presently. Surely you will want to rest in your room."

I was taken up a broad staircase before I had time to say more than "bon jour." Every inch of the stairway walls was hung with engravings, and in the large hall above stood four great carved chests on which were Delft vases.

I remembered John's explanation that sets of Delft vases were always in fives, to complete the line of such chests. These Danzig chests held the clothes and linens in every Polish house, if not the old ones, then heavily carved copies. The brass chandelier hanging from the ceiling was also Dutch in feeling.

"This is John's room."

I was to use John's room! I confusedly muttered something about its being so cozy.

"You have an hour to lie down and rest," John's mother spoke softly, as she closed the door. The highly carved bed

had been turned down. The sheets were of the finest handkerchief linen, inlaid with old lace and beautifully monogrammed. They buttoned on to a golden yellow quilt, which was also soft and of the finest satin. Two gigantic beruffled pillows left me little room in which to stretch out, but as I wriggled down into all this cool freshness, I felt a great peace flooding through me.

John's room! It was so different from what I expected. John seemed adventurous. This room was so protective. Old Persian shawls hung on the walls and covered a large deep ottoman piled with pillows of ancient cashmere. All the bright colors in the room had sombered to a soft monotone. At the windows were apple-green moire curtains which veiled the light. On the wall were John's sketches and sketches by Polish painters. Over the bed was a photograph of the Holy Family by Luini.

As I lay there studying every detail, there on the bookshelf were the familiar brown bindings of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, the red *Alice in Wonderland*, and the blue *Wind in the Willows*, beside the *Peter Rabbit* series that had always stood in my own room in Boston. I imagined the deepest reaches of John's mind were brightened with the same childhood pictures. The reassuring sight of these books had put me into a comfortable doze when, out in the street, I heard a strange throaty cry. I ran to see what it was. Only a woman on one of those heavy carts we had passed in such numbers coming from the station.

We were on a street of new houses. Behind us and at one side were similar streets lined with stubby little trees and big white houses, most of which had red tile roofs and were too big for the plots on which they stood. From the second story I could see over the walls into the other gardens. Overgrown with shrubbery, they had winding paths and benches. Here and there a summer house was jammed into a corner, in a futile attempt to condense a whole acre's planting on a city plot. The workmen's model houses with woodbine over the porches and grass close about them seemed to fit the ground much better than their fine neighbors.

While I was gazing out of the window, the door opened and the old woman who had brought up my bag came in. From her smiles and gestures, it was obvious that lunch was ready and that she wanted to unpack my things. I hurriedly dressed and went downstairs.

The Professor and his wife were standing under an immense palm in a room so full of furniture that it was impossible not to bump into something. The sun streaming through two French windows caught on the gold bronze of the Empire furniture, the gold threads in the wall hangings, and glistened on the crystal chandelier. The whole room shimmered before my eyes. Perhaps I was still unsteady from the two sleepless nights of the trip, for my head reeled. As through a mist, I heard them apologizing for receiving me alone. They wanted to ask me questions about their son. For dinner, they had invited some college friends of John's. For lunch tomorrow, some professors of the university, who could perhaps give me some help in my studies. One of John's oldest friends had invited me for dinner tomorrow evening.

Luncheon was served in another dazzling room where the windows seemed disproportionately large. The furniture, rugs, and carpets had all been bought in 1900 at the time of their marriage. The furniture, made in Paris by Gallet, had chairs, the backs of which represented the petals of a lily! The rug had the same pattern. The silk curtains, designed by William Morris, had come from England. The walls were dotted with Copenhagen flower plates. Complete in its period, the room held my breathless attention. My faulty French was certainly no proof against such an overpowering distraction.

"You are tired," John's mother gently suggested. "One can never speak a foreign language when one is tired."

I was amazed that she and Michael spoke such good English, more perfect even than John, who lived in England.

"Neither of us has ever been in England," she told me.

"That seems incredible! How was it possible?" I asked.

"I learned my English from a Swiss governess. She taught

me English and German. My mother was French, my sisters and I still talk it together."

The Professor apologized that he spoke no English. He had been brought up in the German-occupied Poland under Bismarck, and had studied in Berlin University, where he lectured before he became Professor in Cracow.

"How is John's English?" he asked in French. "He and Michael went to an English school in Switzerland, but John had to do his primary work in Cracow, in German, of course. My wife took the children abroad when Michael was seven, so that he would escape starting to school under the Germans. She intended to remain only a couple of years. But then the war came, and they were able to return only after the Russian collapse." He told me sadly, "Now he will never lose that dreadful guttural 'r'."

I thought, "If we marry, we will not be separated like that."

My voice quivered when I had to speak of John. I hoped they would think I did not know him well enough to tell them anything they did not already know.

"*Vous ne suivez pas les mêmes cours ?*" the Professor asked with a sweet smile.

"No. I am studying only International Law and Political Science." Ah, was it possible they suspected something?

"John has had a sore throat for the last month," I said, meaning to imply I knew no recent details of his work. This put them in a panic.

What doctor had he seen? Did he take proper precautions? London is so damp — they hoped his room was suitable and properly heated. I had embarked on an enthusiastic picture of his new room on Oakley Street, and the pieces of Meissen China he had picked up for nothing at the Caledonian market, when I was choked by the idea, "What will they think about your knowing so much about his room?"

But they thought nothing, and went on asking questions about their son with a most natural solicitude.

Coffee was served in a large library. Books in green book-cases stood as high as my head. Above them, pictures and

prints covered every inch of the wall. Carpets, furniture, curtains were all dark green, and in spite of a fire, the room made one shiver. Here again, the maximum number of high-backed chairs had been crowded in around a long table covered with a green felt cloth edged in heavy fringe, with a darker green felt applique. It was hard to imagine this dark room in a recently built house.

John's mother took out her embroidery, while father and son paced the length of the room behind each other. Every few minutes the Professor looked at his watch, although a fine French clock seemed to be keeping time on the marble shelf. When a half hour was past, he said, "*Je vais à l'Université*. My son will show you about Cracow." A well-rehearsed string of names which meant nothing to me indicated what I was to see.

It was a beautiful afternoon. The sun was hot, but a chill damp came out of the ground. On the broad street where the street car ran, a scraper was piling up the mud into little piles. Even so, the mud was often ankle deep. Since there was no taking a cab, I suggested we should walk. Now I wanted to talk about John. "Show me his school. What did he do with his free time?" I tried to make it clear I was more interested in the way they lived, than in the museums of Cracow.

Michael refused to understand. "Since you were here last summer three new rooms have been opened in the Wawel."

I didn't want to see the Wawel.

"Was the altar of Panna Maria opened when you were here before?"

"Which church is Panna Maria?" I asked.

After struggling to explain which was Panna Maria, it became clear that I had not seen the Church of Our Lady.

As we walked into town, Michael pointed out the renaissance houses, re-constructing them back through their various additions and modifications. We stepped into open doorways to see coffered ceilings or arcaded courtyards. By the time we reached Panna Maria, the sun was no longer

shining through the golden twelfth-century windows, and the great carved wood altar tryptich of Wit Stwosz was shut. We went on to the Wawel. It was closed.

Now I was thoroughly cold. It was only four o'clock, but the several coffee houses we passed were packed to capacity.

"What about something warm?" I suggested.

"Excellent!"

I then discovered we would have to walk some six or eight blocks to the Café Michael always frequented. He explained that never in his life had he been in the coffee house we were passing.

"Is there anything wrong with them?" I asked. "Isn't the coffee the same everywhere?"

"Yes," he replied humbly.

"Then why go further?" It was hard to understand why there were only two places Michael and his friends ever patronized.

"Does John have all these same prejudices? I am cold and have walked enough," I said belligerently. "I don't feel like meeting anyone anyway."

"This one will do, but you won't like it as much as our regular place," he said as he pushed aside a heavy felt which hung over the door which resulted in retaining all the smoke inside.

During the coffee, I tried to ferret out the family prejudices and traditions. "You have to go to church?"

"Naturally we go to church every Sunday."

"You have to?"

"We want to."

I could not understand why, not through duty, nor because the right people did it, nor to meet friends there, nor because you were afraid of punishment if you did not. It was as much a part of life as the routine of eating and sleeping, working and playing. It rounded off existence. Well, my existence felt no need of that kind of rounding off.

Outside it was dark and cold. Michael called a taxi. When we arrived at home both parents were anxiously waiting in the hall.

You have not much time to be ready," they said. "Dinner is at eight."

Upstairs on my desk was a letter from John.

"Dearest :

I was so miserable when you left that I had nothing better to do than to go back to Elm Park Mansions. We sat on both sides of the fireplace and pretended that we were bearing it bravely.

Everything is strange, but the change is so great that I really can't quite realize that you are gone. It doesn't seem like the same world, but with you not in it, it seems like two entirely different worlds.

I enclose 'the letter.' I hope that it will be like taking an umbrella, that it will prove unnecessary. There is nothing more in it than what we talked about last night. It isn't very very important anyway whether I write or not, I know you will charm them. I only hope it will give you a greater sense of assurance. My thoughts are with you always. I keep looking at the watch, wondering what you are doing at each moment. I hope this arrives before you do."

Would John's family guess without my telling them anything? Would they both think it the right thing to do? For, after all, marrying John would also be marrying his parents. I read over the letter once before I began dressing, and again when I was dressed.

When I came down, two guests had arrived, and were seated deep in the shadow under the palm tree in the drawing room, where an even sharper shadow underlined their gaunt features. The gentleman, Professor Heydel, was hardly 30 but his red hair had become putty colored and his freckles merely intensified his sallow complexion. The lady, I learned later, was Mary Rosner. Her black eyes were the only features one saw in the white face framed in jet black hair. She could have been 40, but I learned later she was only 23.

But I had forgotten their pale ugliness within five minutes' conversation. Their ideas, crudely expressed because of poor English, betrayed an intelligence that put me to shame. I found myself in a passionate discussion about Nineteenth

Century art, which I had never, except for the French impressionists, thought worth notice. Whereas they carefully discussed painters and paintings, I had indulged in a sweeping statement about the whole period. It was soon obvious that they were interested in a variety of techniques, the colors and themes of specific painters, and not their qualities in the general way for which my college days' discussions had trained me. There was no question of like or dislike — they judged museums more by the number of schools represented than by the numbers of Raphaels, Rembrandts and Van Dykes. The great and known names were put aside as accepted planets, in a search for new stars and new constellations. I found this very disconcerting of course. Soon I found myself being urged to go once more to the little museum over the market.

Professor Heydel explained. "It's true Matejko painted historical scenes which probably are dull to you, but he uses a very different technique than that of his contemporaries. English Burne-Jones, or French Delacroix, Ingres, David. His themes are conditioned by the times. No Polish history books were allowed in circulation during that period. Poland's long and magnificent history was cunningly obliterated by German and Russian historians, whose statements were accepted as fact by American and English historians. No one questioned the German version that Poland had always been partitioned, that the brief periods of its independence were marked with internal disorder and anarchy, and that when Poland became too much of a nuisance, Germany had felt itself called upon, in the interest of a peaceful Europe, to subdue."

I admitted that this was my vague impression of Poland's nebulous past.

"Matejko as a painter was painting for Poland. Every child knew that Poland under Sobieski had been one of the most powerful states in Europe, twice or thrice as big as present Poland. Poland was a united nation when, in France, the king, with the help of Jeanne d'Arc was struggling for recognition by the French people. The history of every nation is not without internal struggles even as recently as the

American Civil War. England had her Cromwell, her Mary, Queen of Scots. Yet no foreign power had ever dominated Poland until the expansion of Prussia in 1770. For five hundred years Poland was the great power of Central Europe. During all that time Germany could not unite as a nation. From the fall of the Holy Roman Empire until after the Napoleonic Wars, when the Austrian Metternich tried to revive it, Germany was split into a hundred little principalities."

"If Poland was so strong and Germany so weak, why did she fall?" I asked.

"Her very strength was her weakness. Her power had been unchallenged for so long, it was hard to persuade the people to vote for a sufficiently strong army. No one believed either Germany or Russia would dare start a war against Poland. Some members of the great Potocki, Branicki, and Radziwill families thought it better to let Prussia have Danzig than fight. There were plenty of northern ports. Perhaps they even imagined this would strengthen the Port of Memel. But Poland found it too expensive to ship so far north, or pay the heavy toll through Danzig. Actually the rump state existed nearly thirty-five years, growing weaker and poorer. The men fought without pay, and when ammunition gave out, they were cornered and disarmed."

"But the Librum Veto?" I exclaimed. "I thought that was the great weakness of Poland."

"Have you never read the letters of Catharine of Russia to Prussia and Austria?" Professor Heydel asked. "You must understand the hatred of democracy which existed under those autocrats. She wrote 'It is the greatest danger to our thrones that a country governed by democratic principles should be at our very gates. How can we ever expect to fulfill our divine mission, when in Poland every man can freely speak his mind?' Poland's constitution of May 3, 1792, begins, 'Since it is axiomatic that all men are created free and equal . . .'"

"What? — Actually that —"

During our discussion, the room had filled up. Not wishing to break into our conversation, the other guests had stood



Marie Curie and Prof. Kostanecki at the dedication
of the Curie Cancer Institute in Warsaw



John Galsworthy with
the Professor, during
a visit to Poland



Peasants
at Iowicz



Costumes on Whitsuntide Monday

at the door of the room by a little table on which were tiny glasses for *wodka* and a tray covered by myriads of *zakanski*. As soon as we stood up, the phalanx moved forward, each gentleman bowing stiffly as he shook my hand. I had the impression that the ladies were either short and fat or tall and thin. With their lack of make-up and the bulky bulginess of their very plain dresses, they reminded me of any Cambridge tea party in the Boston of my childhood. The men, as soon as they could go back to their conversations, walked up and down in little groups with their heads together. The host kept running between them, urging a little white *wodka* on this one, a little amber *wodka* on that, while the hostess seated the two eldest of the ladies on a sofa, placed a little table in front of them, and directed the maid to serve them sandwiches.

Unconsciously, I found myself in the corner under the palm, where from a safe vantage point I could watch the scene and muse about John. Try as I would, I could not fit my preconceived picture of him into this frame. The flouncing curtains, the ruffled lamp-shades, the opulently upholstered chairs, even the hairdress of my hostess all seemed like something out of the drawings of Charles Dana Gibson. This was like a memory of gaiety which had been crystallized and preserved through wars and devastations. The *fin du siècle* conserved at all costs — a tradition of Poland maintained against the onslaughts of style. But John was modern, wholly preoccupied with the problems of a new Poland.

"What is your idea of God?" said a voice just at my side. "You are my partner for dinner. Will you take my arm?"

"God?" I gasped. "I'm a Unitarian."

"That is why I am to take you to dinner," the gentleman continued. "I am the curator for the only Unitarian Chapel in Poland. It was built by one of the Radziwills during the Thirty Years' War."

"I thought that was a German war."

"It was. At that time many refugees fled here from religious persecutions in Germany, all the Protestant congregations here date from that time."

"But, this is a Catholic country !"

"If you mean by that," he said laughing, "that we have a conglomeration of all religious orders here, it is. We have Moslems, Jews, Greek Catholics, Russian Orthodox, Lutherans and anything else you like."

We had reached the table, at which eighteen guests, some in evening dress and others not, were seated. There were so many candles, China figures, antique bowls of flowers, that the ugliness of the Gallet furniture and walls hung with plates was lost in the dazzle before us. Little did I imagine, from the profusion of flowers, their cost. Alas, when I wished to send some to my hostess, I found they were worth their weight in gold. A few poor roses cost five dollars, a presentable plant, fifteen.

There were no olives, celery, nuts, or jellies, but a long menu of many curious and good dishes :

Barszcz, with ravioli filled with mushrooms ; a giant pike, smothered in crayfish, quails on toast, with a stuffing of juniper berries, served with a coldslaw of red cabbages, and, to end the meal, a baba filled with ice cream, followed by fruit piled high on a silver platter

After dinner as the guests filed past their hostess, they tried to kiss her hand, to thank her for the meal. But with a sweet smile she would reply to one, "It was a pleasure !" or, "You should come more often," to another, "Tell me what news you have of Marysia," or, "Is your mother in town for long ?" Was she smiling from graciousness or a feeling of shyness and unreality ? How different from the pious woman always working among the poor whom John had described.

All the doors were now thrown open, and the gloomy library was a blaze of lights. The heavy high-backed chairs were very comfortable after the heavy meal. With the curtains pulled, the fire blazing, and the cheerful light, even the dark corners appeared soft and inviting. "A room that came to life by night," I thought. Here I could see the family grow, each with his work laid out on the long table.

"You must be very weary after the long trip from London," several persons remarked.

I tried without success to keep my mind on what was being said. On every side violent conversations in Polish were rolling about me. It seemed as if at least half the guests were quarreling. Many appeared furiously angry, and with clenched hands called heaven to witness the truth of their own arguments. As if in turn, each guest sat by me for a while, politely taking leave whenever a new one appeared.

I was too bewildered by the noise of the strange language to follow what was being said to me, even if an effort was made to speak English.

When Professor Heydel, with whom I was to go in the morning to see the Matejki pictures, came and sat by me, I felt that he was an old friend. At last, here was someone with whom I had had a discussion, whom I knew John loved.

"What are they fighting about?" I asked.

"They are not fighting," he smilingly replied.

"Is that a conversation?"

"The fat lady over there has just published a book of verse. They are talking about her book. Everyone admires it profoundly. The poems are very fresh and simply expressed. Don't you want to meet her?"

As I came toward the group where the poetess was sitting, a gentleman, without stopping what he was saying, pushed nearer the person next him, letting me wedge my chair into the circle. The lady looked up with a preoccupied smile, "*Nous discutons mon livre, qui vient d'être publié,*" she said, and let loose a torrent of Polish to the man who had given me a place.

I sat patiently, but as no one paid any attention to me, and I could not understand a word of what was being said, it was ridiculous to sit there grinning and I got up to go. The lady poetess grabbed me by the arm.

"Can you come to tea Thursday? Just a few friends. There are so many questions I want to ask you. You will tell me what is being published in England and America. Perhaps you have some poetry with you. . . T. S. Eliot? Or, of course, the latest Aldous Huxley?"

I murmured something about traveling light.

"When you come to tea at five you will give me lots of notes. That will be lovely. Madame will direct you."

"I will bring her," promised Professor Heydel, relieving me of trying to learn her name, which I felt in advance would be hopeless — and her address.

The guests were saying good night, I would be able to escape. The dogs, who had been tied up in the kitchen, now stood in the hall waiting for their beds to be brought in. As soon as they were put down, they sprang to their regular places, Jock the Dobermann, by the wall, and little Jip, the dachshund, pushed to a corner.

I tried to express my appreciation for the lovely evening, but an abstracted look now dominated my hostess' face. The party was over and past. Her mind was already far away. The Professor tucked in the dogs, and barricaded the stairs — "Otherwise they will try and come in your room during the night," — he asked whom I found the most interesting. He was full of the party. Turning to his wife, he said, "No use giving women good wine. Did you see how Marysia left her Burgundy until the sweet, and then sipped the Tokay first? Janio was the only one who refused. The others paid no attention. I thought Franek knew more about wines. He let the maid fill his glass, and then left it. What a pleasure to see how Rostworowski went through two glasses of the Sauterne. That, by the way, was bought in 1864 for the marriage of his wife's father." The Sauterne in question had become so dry that I thought it was sherry. I hastily said, "I never drank anything so delicious in my life. Un-iced too!"

"Of course," he said impatiently. "Did you like the Raki sauce for the pike? That is my invention."

My longing to go to my room, unnoticed by the Professor, for whom this was the perfect moment of the evening, was clear to his wife.

"Miss Adams has had such a long trip. She should go to bed," she spoke gently, and turning to me she asked, "Can my maid come to help you?"

I hoped my refusal was polite, that my expressed gratitude was commensurate to their efforts on my behalf. At last my door was shut. I rushed to the desk to write John, telling him of my loneliness at being so far away from him, the stupidity of not letting him come and show me what Michael was trying to show, my sense of humility before his parents, who, in my superior way, I had pictured as tight-faced, threadbare individuals, living in a cold cheerless apartment like those I had seen in Heidelberg. I had imagined varnished linoleum on the floor of the Victorian dining room ; a dark court room, entered from a long, narrow hall ; on one side an umbrella stand and on the other would be a pressed wood hat-rack, where all the overcoats were hung. The drawing room, too, would be very sparsely furnished — perhaps with a round highly polished and carved black walnut table, covered with a filet, and a fern standing in a greenish yellow pot. In the corners of the room I could see pairs of stiff, uncomfortable black walnut chairs.

"My mother has worn black ever since the war," John had told me. "I hope you will influence her to buy a new dress. She only thinks of her charities. Now you will give my parents something to talk about. Father is so much in his laboratory, and mother so absorbed in her good works." What a cold and forlorn picture ! His mother's dresses did have a timeless plainness. The body of a Dana Gibson dress, from which all the ruffles had been removed — but neither she nor the house was bleak. Quite the contrary, the very house itself exuded permanence and peace, as something that has withstood war and change.

Seeing the light under the door, the old woman who had unpacked my things came in. In broken French, she asked to help me. "I was John's nurse," she explained, "I have been with the family since I was sixteen, and the Madame fourteen. I have taken care of her for forty years. Kazia and Helka have both been here nearly thirty years, Bronia only ten. Before the war we had two men servants, but Madame doesn't care for that now. We live very quietly." She had rapidly put away my things. "Mademoiselle must go to

bed," she said with authority. "There will be much tomorrow. When you are awake, ring this bell and Kazia will bring your breakfast. She is a very stupid girl. If something is not right, let me know." She then found out that I drank coffee, could not eat three or even two eggs, and quickly left the room.

John had warned me, "Be careful. You can hide nothing from Andzia. She washed my diapers and emptied the night pots."

The arc light outside the window swung a beam of light across the room. To go to sleep, I had to pull the heavy moire curtains, which I feared would keep out all the air, but I fell asleep at once.

When I waked, the dogs were barking at the postman. I rang — perhaps there was a letter for me. Almost instantly the door opened. The dogs bounced about the bed. An old woman with jet black hair in braids tripped in to curtsy and to kiss my hands. She shut the window, making at the same time a long giggling speech in Polish, then she felt my arms to see if I was cold, dived into my cupboard, rushed out of the room, and soon was back with a bed jacket. Having arranged the breakfast table with squeals and giggles, she took all my clothes away, and finally reappeared with the breakfast tray, on which was the letter from John.

My deliberate indifference did not conceal anything from her. With more squeals and giggles, she made me realize that her romantic heart had seen what neither father nor mother had ; that this was no ordinary visit of the erudite American lady, bent on completing work for a thesis.

John wrote :

"Darlingest,

Life is getting more and more hectic. Your letter from Berlin came yesterday and the telegram today. I spent yesterday and today trying to persuade myself that a letter from Cracow might come last night. Of course, it didn't. Then, my hopes were concentrated on the morning mail, then on the lunch mail. Now I must write to catch the 8.40 train. Darling, thank you so much for the sweetest letter. It's just you all over.

"I didn't realize you were going to see Eble in Berlin, or I would have written him. By the way, how do you spell 'nauseating,' 'financial,' 'propaganda' ?

I was just thrilled to get your telegram, but now am getting more and more restless awaiting the explanation. Some details I can picture, — what a time you had sending the wire, the diplomatic difficulties centering around it. I hope you get my letters in time."

The door to my room was ajar. The dogs, whose patience was exhausted, were barking for crusts. Jip jumped up on the beautiful satin quilt. This made Jock furious, and he bared his teeth. Jip sprang at his throat, while I held the little table to keep it from being overturned.

Black-haired Kazia rushed in with a pail of water, which she hurled all over the rug. The old nurse came running with a shawl, hoping to disentangle them. By this time, Michael arrived and the Professor appeared, both in blue dressing gowns. One pulled, the other gave frenzied commands. The dogs were dragged, dripping with blood, from the room.

A dog fight, of course, didn't trouble me. I was concerned for the frightful mess. The youngest servant, Bromia, soon had the water back in the pail, while Helka, the cook, waved her apron, and moaned that such an accident should have occurred before a guest. She curtsied, then glanced at me, having forgotten in her excitement that she had greeted me half a dozen times before.

Madame Kostanecka was the last to arrive. Showing the bystanders out of the room, she apologized for the intrusion. "They all lose their heads when the dogs get into a fight." Looking at her wrist watch she remarked that it was late, already ten. "If you are to be in town by eleven, you will have to hurry. The housekeeper, John's old nurse, has your bath running." You could hear the thumping and bumping of the water boiling in the gas geyser.

Dressed as usual in a tremendously full black alpaca skirt and apron over a striped gingham shirtwaist, Andzia came in, her heavy bare arms dripping with water, to inquire how hot I liked my bath. "Does Mademoiselle like the water 35,

36 or 37?" she asked. What precision! Not knowing centigrade, I went to see.

In a large tiled room, the tub stood high off the ground and well out from the wall. The better to clean behind it, I supposed! In the corner the hot water was roaring and spouting out of a handsome nickel-plated geyser. Beside the tub was a chair, hidden under an immense bath towel which stretched to the ground and covered the footstool, by which I was to climb into the tub. On a table were all kinds of brushes and wash cloths, soaps and powders. "You may not like scented soap," Andzia said, putting a new cake of Castile soap in the dish.

Not to seem ungrateful for all her effort, I stayed longer in the tub than was really necessary. It was late when at last I reached the museum, Professor Heydel had already gone up, leaving Mary Rosner, his companion of the previous evening, to wait for me.

"I had a letter from John this morning," she said. "He wrote me I should talk to you as freely as I would to him." Looking at me more intently, she remarked, "Marrying John will be a very great responsibility."

"What did John tell you?" I asked. "How do you know?" I was stifled by this precipitation of my affairs.

"What else could we expect when you came here? I am sure you have all the qualities, but John is the finest person I know. Besides, his family means a very great deal to Poland. Intellectually it is one of the most important families of Cracow." She then went on, "How do you like Madame Kostanecka? She frightens me. I never dare talk to her. Professor Kostanecki is easy to get along with though he has a very big position here. Do you think you could live all your life with us?"

"John could get into the Bank of England. That is the subject of his thesis, and he has seen the Director, who may take him," I told her.

"John's place is in Poland," she spoke vehemently. "He would never be permanently happy outside his country. If you keep him out of Poland you will ruin his life."

"You can't know how John has changed. He has become very international now," I replied.

"That's your influence on him."

Professor Heydel looked down the stairs of the museum. "Well, there you are," he laughed, waving his hat.

He told me later that he had never had a more attentive listener. It almost encouraged him to give up lecturing on economics at the University and become an official museum guide. But I heard not one word of his explanations of the great historical scenes painted on enormous canvasses, with life-size figures, depicting Sobieski receiving the vanquished Turks before Vienna, and the protesting of the first partition of Poland by the Polish Parliament. I saw them in a daze. When at 12.30 Michael appeared to take me home, Mary's remarks were still ringing in my ears.

Lunch was to be at one. The guests began arriving ten minutes before the hour, Archbishop Sapieha and some ten of the professors. No ladies had been invited. Everyone stood for the *wodka*, except the Archbishop, who sat on the sofa, took precedence going into the dining room, and sat at the head of the table. The sun, which in the morning is hidden by the mists that hang over Cracow, came pouring into the dining room. The wine, the sun, the heavy meal thawed out my heart, which had been frozen by Mary's words. But it was hard to dispel the feeling that this was a little island of comfort and safety in a wilderness of savage peasantry living like animals in mud, poverty, and disease. I thought, "I will only marry John if he promises to become an American."

The gentleman beside me tried unsuccessfully to catch my attention. "These are a special kind of Polish mushrooms," he said. "They are red, a great delicacy. The peasants find them in the woods."

They had a strange leathery consistency that remained tough under the parmesan sauce in which they were baked.

There was a moment of silence when the maid brought in a row of birds on a platter, which was passed first to the Arch-

bishop. "Do you have pheasants in your country?" my neighbor asked me.

I told him that we did, though infrequently.

"Those red berries grow in the woods too. The pheasants eat them, so we eat them on the pheasants," he said, laughing heartily at his own joke.

Finally a large bowl of immense peaches, preserved whole, were served. These were framed by little cakes which had been laid around the serving plate. Our host explained that this was the first crop of his peaches. He had brought the slips from France in a valise, and budded the trees this year. He had picked two dozen peaches, he told us with pride and pleasure. We must have had all of them. A murmur of approval went up from all the guests, who I imagined were complimenting him in Polish for his great success in ripening peaches in such a cold country.

Coffee was, as usual, served in the dark library. The little side lamps were lighted, though the window shades had been pulled well back, and there was brilliant sunlight in the next room.

Now the moment of business had arrived. I mustered all my forces for the discussion ahead and latched paper and pencil to write down the answers. "Was it true," I asked, "that industry in Upper Silesia would be hampered by lack of rail connection to the sea?"

"A new road was in process of building," they replied. "A new port in Gdynia would be completed within a year or so, subsidized by special rates, of course." Could such a program be accomplished in time, I wondered? "How would machine parts be replaced? Poland had no machine tool industry and Germany had closed her frontier to the export of machine parts."

"Poland was beginning to produce them. This stupid policy of Germany's had played into Poland's hands. The Germans would be the first to regret having made her neighbor independent," I was told. "Best see for yourself in Silesia." Letters to managers of such new industries were offered me and the gentlemen plunged into an animated discussion of

which factories I should see. There was no use asking if the quality of Polish machine tools would be as good. They would say yes, and I could not believe this possible.

As for the question of maintenance of order, the Germans had told me the Polish police were inadequate for the protection of a mining community. The training of police to handle strikers requires them to have a tradition behind them. Patiently I was told that the English had been invited to organize the Polish police. "We prefer the English system. The British police protect the individual. The German protects the state against the individual. Our police are still under English supervision. They are not allowed to shoot, except in self-protection. We have had no trouble, and expect no trouble." Poland based her assertions on promises for the future, Germany on accomplishments in the past. My American training had taught me to prefer the tried and known to the untried and unknown. Yet within two years, I learned, five hundred miles of railroad was completed, which carried fourteen million tons of coal a year to Gdynia, the most modern, the best equipped, the most efficient port in that part of the world.

I was then offered letters of introduction to business men or engineers in Upper Silesia. At last, I should see the province under Polish guidance. But what I was groping for, which I could not then, and never was able to find in the Poles was that self-assurance which would make the world believe in them, that booster club spirit which would convince me that under Polish leadership the Polish half of the Silesian province would develop the finest little mining towns in the world. Polish modesty could hardly be a match for German high pressure salesmanship — that salesmanship which trumpeted the slogan of the unjust Peace abroad, while squeezing little neighbor nations.

After everyone had gone, Father Michalski, the professor of medieval philosophy at the University, stayed on at the request of my hosts. He had spent his life identifying manuscripts in the libraries of the Vatican, of Paris, of Oxford and Cambridge; manuscripts, the contents of which, as well as

the authors, are uncatalogued and unknown. They hoped that in talking to him, I would find an answer to the most fundamental part of the problem I wished to solve — the worthiness of the Poles to rule Germans, the capacity of Poles to take the responsibility of running such a valuable productive enterprise.

What I had just heard seemed to my ears but rash promises. I was still inclined to believe that it would be better for the Poles to appease the insatiable appetite of the Germans, in order to promote international prosperity, to speed repayment of German debts and to preserve the peace.

How terribly sad that such wonderful people as these should be part of a nation whose future seemed so obscure and grey. They must be different, I tried to believe, they must be different from everyone else. Their wealth makes them international, I thought, their friends must be a little isolated group in this great forlorn sea of unfriendly beings. Yet I had to acknowledge that when I had studied at Heidelberg I had never spoken out so frankly to anyone. There I could never forget I was in Germany. I had never seen the counterpart of my Boston friends among them. Nationality, like a curtain, had always hung between us. Such discussions about art or about religion as I had had the evening before, or such questions as I had asked the professors this morning could not have been asked without causing great offense in Germany.

All those fine qualities I loved most in John were reflected in his people — his sweet and forgiving nature, his understanding grasp of the essential details of any problem and his perseverance irrespective of all obstacles. How patient everyone was with me! My impudence suddenly became unendurable to myself, and through my mind flashed all the details of my papers whose answers I would never know. The docket litigations between Poles and Germans which filled several volumes at the Supreme Court — one must be a lawyer to understand these! The five shelves of volumes on civil cases settled in a civil court — how superficially I had looked over them! The answer lay in these volumes,

in the daily settlement by law of great and petty charges. There could be no going back on the Treaty of Versailles, which for better or for worse had drawn a boundary, and provided that for fifteen years two international courts, one presided over by a Swiss, the other by a Belgian, were to arbitrate all differences. For fifteen years, all Silesian Germans who wished could liquidate their affairs and go back to Germany. How presumptuous then to suggest that this reasonable settlement should be upset because of the Germans' desire for more territory. I realized suddenly that because the Poles had not adopted the German tactics of shouting loudly over what they had lost, the world would believe that the little they had received should be taken away.

My throat tightened as I perceived the level of my questions and the quality of the answers. Madame Kostanecka must have seen the change in my face. She suddenly seemed to understand the cause of my humility. "Oh, my poor little girl — my poor little girl!" she said and flung her arms about me. Father Michalski, whom I had completely forgotten, left the room with the Professor.

"What made you guess?" I asked.

"I fear it will be very hard for you," she said as she burst into tears. Even then I realized she was a person who did not cry easily. As I put my head on her shoulder I knew nothing could ever be too hard for me as long as she was alive. In her embrace I felt the protective love which would shield us both. In the instant she had perceived why I was there, she had accepted me as her own child.

"I have always longed for a daughter. Now I have you."

"John wrote a letter for me to give you in case you didn't guess. Do you want to see it now?"

We went out in the hall where the Professor was still standing. Madame Kostanecka said, "*Elle sera notre fille.*"

"Is it true?" he asked, and holding my head in his hands, he kissed me on the forehead.

They put their arms about me as we went upstairs. I gave them the letter which they took to their own room. Once alone, I threw myself down on the sofa, and burying my face

in the soft cashmere pillow, wept bitterly, not only from pent up emotion, but because of the decision to become a Pole, to cut myself off from my family forever, putting the great ocean and all these miles of land between us, and from the English language, which I had loved and, in school, had tried to write. As I lay there, the years stretched ahead of me like a road across an endless plain. Around and beside me were children, all speaking Polish, and no familiar face or sign were near.

When the door opened, the Professor was bringing in a bunch of red roses "We have telegraphed to John," he told me. "We are so glad. Mother will go back to London with you as soon as you are ready to leave, and as soon as I can do so I will follow. I must be in London in April anyway." He did not add that it was because he was to receive from King George's own hand the distinguished Order of the British Empire, not only for having been Mayor of Cracow during those war years when Austrian Poland was overrun by the Russians ; but for his internationally known work on the appendix, for having been Dean of the Medical School, for his many years as Rector of Cracow University, and for having organized the Polish Academy of Science.

What he said was : "All engagements are cancelled. The servants have been told that no visitors will be received. Plans for the future are too pressing. There is no time for idle visiting."

CHAPTER 3

*A*LL at once I had ceased to be a stranger. Even the house seemed more welcoming. Bedroom doors were left open, and father and son walked from room to room in easy familiarity. Madame Kostanecka had put on a Japanese kimono, a Whistlerian touch she always wore en famille. You could hear her bell ringing, and when she spoke to the servants, it was no longer in hushed tones.

Without knocking, she opened my door. "Is your head still aching, dear? Come lie down in my room. I have ordered tea sent up for you to take with a migraine powder. Here is a letter from John, which came in the afternoon mail."

Poor John, waiting in London! He wrote, "My, how I wish I could be in Cracow. I sit in Battersea Park, basking in the sun. It makes me wild to think that Michael is doing for you what by all human and divine right I should be doing! I hope you get on with all my friends." And he ended with the words, "You are living, while I am merely putting in time."

How could I tell him how different Cracow was to what I had expected? So much warmer and brighter.

Having quickly read the letter, I went into Madame Kostanecka's bedroom. It was upholstered and curtained in the same gay chintz that made the background for all John's baby pictures, red poppies, blue cornflowers and white daisies in prim rows against a white background.

"What a lovely light room!" I exclaimed. "Is it really the same chintz background in the photographs of John as a baby? How did it keep that fresh color?"

"Yes, it was sent out from England when I was married," she replied. Turning the dogs off the sofa, she made a great pile of soft, fluffy pillows. "Now lie down and take the powder. Perhaps it will help you," she spoke gently.

Father and son were pacing up and down the length of the room and into the adjacent little boudoir. Watching them from the next room I thought how similar the three were. I could see why people often mistook John for Michael and vice versa. Both were nearly six feet tall and powerfully built whereas the father who was a half a head shorter, was slight and finely boned. Yet both boys were the image of their father, the same wide-set eyes in a broad high forehead, the same aquiline nose and well balanced chin, the same hypersensitive mouth curved in a gentle smile. All three had heads like the bust of a Roman senator yet tempered with such intelligence that one could not conceive any-one of the three losing their self control

Madame Kostanecka sat down at her desk, which was stacked with papers and letters. Like the rest of the room, every inch of space on her desk was overflowing. On the walls, between paintings, were photographs of the family, taken at various times. Under the glass table tops, snapshots covered the entire surface. Bookshelves were crammed with double rows of books. Besides the siphon and glasses on one table, there was a lace-drum, to which a half-made piece of lace was pinned, a heap of knitting, a piece of embroidery, the latest newspapers, and many odds and ends scattered among books and letters. Yet the room was not untidy. It gave the impression of being lived in by a fully occupied individual. Madame Kostanecka, who was in her fifties and fast going grey, was as capable of keeping a great many objects in order as she was able to carry on a multitude of charitable activities at the same time.

"We were making plans when you came in," the Professor said.

"It is so kind of you to come to England to meet my parents."

"No use discussing what's all settled," he quickly replied.

"We were just saying that it would be enough if we each took two portmanteaus. Can one count on warm weather at this season?"

"London? — In spring . . ."

"I will take a train for Warsaw an hour later than you leave for Silesia," said Madame Kostanecka, "to be certain my passport is ready as soon as your work is finished."

"All this trouble of taking an extra trip to Warsaw!"

"I am glad to see my sisters," she insisted. "The mail might be slow if I wrote for the passport."

"In Warsaw you will seem so far away." I shivered.

Her dark eyes glowed as she replied, "The day I receive your telegram, I will take the evening train to Berlin, where we will meet and continue on to London together."

The Professor pulled a telegram from his pocket. "I sent off a wire to my cousin Lignewski, the one to whom John wrote asking if you could stay with them while you are in Silesia. Here is the reply," he said, reading it. "At the Katowice Station you are to watch for his chauffeur. He has some business meetings. He sends his apologies he cannot be there to meet you."

"How I wish one of you could go with me!" I sighed, already enmeshed in the gentle protective grip of the family.

"The sooner you get your work done, the sooner we can all be together again," John's mother sensibly remarked.

Once all the arrangements had been made there was nothing more to keep me in Cracow, the next day I was put aboard the local train for Katowice by Michael and the Professor.

"They will see you on to the right train," Madame Kostanecka had said, "and we will be meeting so soon that this is just *au revoir*."

I hugged these comforting words as I gazed out of the slowly moving train. During the week of spring sunshine, little lines of faint green wheat cast a light over the muddy ground and the bare brown orchards. Now, water stood only in the center of the fields. The many streams had receded to their banks. On the fences of brush about the farm cottages, lengths of linen woven during the long winter were

bleaching. Children were jumping up and down at the road crossings, the wind blowing their hair. The train ran along the base of sleepy little hills, which were black with evergreen woods. A wide valley stretched to the horizon, where chalk cliffs, jagged like ruined castles, were honey-colored in the afternoon sun. On the unpaved road that ran beside the tracks, occasional peasant carts were slowly moving under heavy loads of coal or wood, the driver walking at the horse's side, a long knotted whip in his hand. At every siding were freight cars, stacked with great quantities of lumber, coal and iron. The increasing numbers of freight cars and chimneys along the horizon showed that we were approaching an industrial area. The train stopped more and more frequently. Less and less farmed land was to be seen between the little towns, and hillocks of slag and coal dust, and open pits increased.

As we neared each station, I peered anxiously for the name. Zebrzydowice . . . Trzebnia . . . Zabkowice . . . at last Katowice! Here everyone got out of the train. The big covered station reminded me of the old South Station in Boston with trains made up on many platforms. I must have been conspicuous in the crowd. A chauffeur touched his cap, saying, "Lignewski?" and led me to a car where a girl of my own age was sitting.

She greeted me in perfect English. "I am Helen Lignewska. My father apologizes for not meeting your train, but he has an important conference."

We drove across Katowice, a handsome town with fine banks and stately administrative buildings and out a long muddy road. Their house stood in a large garden beside the Pit head of Michalkowice. This was the coal mine where Lignewski worked as Director. It was one of the few mines the Poles had been able to buy from the Germans.

"The house is not very home-like, I am afraid. We have been here only two years," Helen sighed. "We had to leave everything in Russia, of course, when the Bolsheviks took over the mines where father was employed. We were lucky to come out alive. How many of my Polish friends were

caught there!" She told me of being in Odessa while the Bolsheviks shelled the town, of their escape on a Black Sea freighter to Constantinople, and their difficulties in reaching Poland.

It was an enormous Victorian mansion large enough for a hotel, built by the former German mine owners. Of irregular shape with wing turrets and carvings, every window was of a different size and height. Palm trees, wicker furniture and linoleum laid down in the hall, exaggerated the cheerlessness of the high ceilings.

Helen apologized as we entered the living room: "You see, we simply can't seem to make it cozy! Give me some good advice. See, I have samples of curtains. Tell me which you think best." We passed on into a baronial hall designed in the best brewery tradition, with Gothic ceilings and mullioned casements. Over the mantel were elks' heads and rows of buck horns. Yellow stained-glass windows threw a checker-board pattern over everything. The heavy sofas and chairs scattered about did not improve the hopeless prospect of arranging the room agreeably. On a table was a pile of Waring and Gillon catalogues from London, which had been torn to pieces in an effort to find the right furnishings. The manservant brought up tea in heavy shapeless cups. Helen said with a grimace. "We bought also this, from the Germans, when we took over the mines."

While we drank our tea, she asked me whom I wanted to see. We looked over the letters of introduction that had been given me in London and Cracow. Taking the telephone, she soon had made all the appointments, putting down each hour and day on a large sheet of paper. It would take about a week's time. I was to see the German Consul and the Polish Provincial Governor, the judges of the two courts, the President of the Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Korfanty, leader of the Silesian Rebellion, the Bishop of Silesia, the representative of Harriman, Mr. Brooks, and the managers of the principal mines and foundries on both the Polish and the German sides of the province. The car, Helen repeated, would be at my disposal at any time.

When I came down for dinner Mr. Lignewski had returned. He made no effort to hide his absorption in his own work and his lack of interest in my study. The conversation lapsed after a few casual questions about his cousin, Professor Kostanecki whom he rarely saw, and of the progress John was making in London. To him the boundaries of Poland had been settled, for better or for worse, and there existed only the pressing problem of running and managing a tremendous coal mine, working in three shifts of over a thousand miners each. He would be delighted to take me down whenever I wished. Had I ever been down a mine? No? Then I could hardly appreciate the improvements he had made. The whole mine was now electrically run, and lights, elevators, trains, drills were all a great improvement on any pits in England. Under his reorganization, production had stepped up twenty-five percent above the German production.

Pleading a headache as soon as coffee was served, I went to my room. It was stiff and white, without a single comfortable chair. The springs in the white wood bed sagged in the middle. The waxed linoleum on the floor and faint sweet odor of disinfectant was like a hospital. I quickly undressed and, having no mail, re-read the last letter from John which he had sent to Cracow :

“Sweetheart,

Your letter from Saturday came last night, and your letter from Friday just now. So that's how things happened! I love you more and more for all the things you are going through for me. Your letter made me blush and burn for shame that you should have to tell the family, though I really saw no other way. It was impossible for me to write them, not being able to foresee at what exact moment the letter would arrive. Fortunately, everything is over. Darling, this is a miserable state of affairs, being away from you at just this moment. Not that I find any reasonable reason why this moment should seem so particularly different from any other, but I am even getting jealous of Jock that he can go for a walk with you whenever he wants to, while I have only your photograph and letters to relieve my utter loneliness. In the dark I can

hear you breathe, and can talk to you for hours, but it is rather hard to do nothing all day long but lie in bed with my head under the pillows.

How quickly will you finish your work in Upper Silesia? I have received the fourth letter from my mother. She is really delighted with you, — a great discourse on those qualities which will make you 'une femme fidele.' I do wonder all the time how you are getting on with them.

Last evening I was at dinner with Lady Napier, a cousin of the Napiers of the League of Nations. We talked about Mr. Marburg. It's a very nice house. Two most delightful dogs fight on the drawing room carpet all evening to entertain the guests. The world is full of you. We played roulette I lost 1 shilling, and your face was flashing all the time over the green cloth I've had a charming letter from Mary R. You won her approval. Also, a letter from the housekeeper. Of course, they all love you."

In a new room amid changed surroundings, I wakened frequently during the night. Even in my sleep I heard the strange noises of the nearby coal mine. Snatches of the information I should need tumbled through my mind. There was so much to do before I was free to go back to John. His honor too was staked on how I should accomplish this task.

My first visit in the morning was to the German Consul, Herr Von Greenow. He called for me with his car at nine sharp, and we drove the length of the Silesian frontier. He wanted to show me the utter preposterousness of drawing a frontier, where here the entrance to a mine was on one side, while the seams ran all on the opposite side, or there it ran through the middle of a town, causing it to be divided by a stream, half in Germany, half in Poland. He showed me many places where workmen from one side crossed to the other side to work. Some twenty-five thousand persons passed the frontier daily! "No logic — just pure maliciousness!" he would repeat at each point. He ignored the obvious conclusion that the frontier itself did not cause real hardships among the workers.

The morning was spent seeing how badly the frontier had been drawn. The afternoon would provide examples of the

"bestial nature of the Poles." During luncheon I was prepared for what I should see.

"The Poles are no better than Jews," the Consul told me. "Poland is full of Jews because the Poles have no feeling of racial superiority over them. They have always let the Jews settle among them freely. They all live alike, in cellars like animals. I will show you some in the towns this afternoon."

"But I have seen Cracow. I know how Poles live."

"Not the rank and file. Those Poles you visited are the exception," Von Greenow told me in all seriousness. "Poles never bathe, they are lousy with typhus."

After we had inspected a couple of towns, not yet rebuilt since the war, with most of the houses still partially in ruins, I was shown one of the new Public Schools built during the last few years, where the German children were being educated at Polish expense. "That only proves that the Poles feel our superiority. They send their own children to school in pigsties."

"It couldn't be because they were trying to do the right thing by the German minority?" I asked. "I thought by the terms of the treaty two Poles were left in Germany for every German left in Poland. What are the Germans doing for the Polish children?"

"They don't want to go to Polish schools now that they have the opportunity of learning according to German methods!" I was told.

The Consul had arranged for us to have tea with one of the German ladies in Katowice, and in the evening I was to go to a working men's club. We were late returning from our drive, and were the last to arrive at the tea. All the ladies were knitting for the miners' children. At Christmas baskets would be given out to all the families who declared themselves German. Several ladies invited me to their houses, but I was not sure whether I would have time. They all wanted to show me how much they were doing for Germany. It never occurred to them that I might consider them disloyal to their new country, or that their good works were seditious.

In the evening I heard singing and speeches in German in a large hall decorated with German flags and maps showing Poland and Alsace Lorraine as part of Germany. This was in 1926 yet lines of thumb tacks, like those in the maps at home in my childhood during the World War, showed the present boundaries.

"When the boys are eighteen," I was told, "they are smuggled over the frontier, so they don't have to serve in the Polish Army."

"Why smuggled?" I asked, "when they cross it every day openly. Surely they can become Germans if they wish."

"But if they did, we would lose the province," they said.

"But it is Polish." I was very confused.

"Not forever. Besides it's most important that they should learn Polish." At the time I could not understand this.

Probably my astonishment was misinterpreted as admiration. They begged me to see more — the work of the school teachers, the text books. They would show me all the stupid naiveté of the Poles.

I could hardly sleep all night. I wrote John a long letter, telling him what I had seen and heard. I told Helen in the morning that she should organize the Polish women to counteract the German work. I could hardly wait for my interview with Dr. Grazynski, the Governor of the province.

The provincial building had been recently completed. It made no effort to impose with large stately rooms or magnificent fittings. The Governor's office was a small paneled room with peasant *kilim* rugs on the walls and floor. The Governor, Mr. Grazynski, received me promptly at the hour set. Without waiting for him to speak, I told him what I had seen the previous day. "Why do you let the Germans foment bad feeling among the miners?" I asked.

He smiled generously. "They would do so anyway. It's better that they should do it openly."

Like so many other Poles, his interest in my studies was purely polite. I found it impossible to explain the impression current abroad that Germany had been wronged by the Treaty of Versailles, and that her frontiers should be rectified.

"But it's we who were wronged, if you put it that way. The Silesian Plebiscite showed by a majority that the whole province was Polish, yet we only received a third of it. We are not demanding a change in the frontier. We are trying to return as quickly as possible to a normal working basis."

"But why don't you shout louder than the Germans, so that the world would know?"

Dr. Grazynski stood up and held out his hand. "We have other more pressing needs for our money than propaganda. Do you really believe you can influence justice? Eventually the world will see that we are right. In the meantime, schools and roads are everywhere necessary."

Poor Grazynski! Poor Poles! They never learned to estimate properly the long arm of German propaganda. Nor were they respected for making the best of a bad bargain.

That afternoon I was to see Mr. Brooks, the American representative of Harriman. Mr. Brooks is one of those American business men who, by their respect for the achievements of others have done so much towards making Americans loved in every country.

I asked him why he had settled on the Polish side of the frontier.

"It is much easier to work with the Poles," was his comment. "The Germans are used to being regimented. You can't run a business that way. I was able to organize this plant with fewer men than the Germans had employed, and yet I increase my production. The Germans would never have been allowed that."

"And train facilities? The Germans claim business will be choked for lack of rolling stock and yard equipment."

"We think the Poles are going to build what they need. The Poles are good engineers," he said. "I prefer the Polish workmen. They are full of initiative and do more than follow orders blindly."

It was the first time I had heard anyone who was not a Pole speak kindly of them. The Poles were gallant. They died bravely, but they were an impractical people, and lived in poverty and ignorance. Now here was a hard-headed

American business man choosing to live among them. He had actually sold his property in Germany, and had deliberately bought in Poland.

I approached the Polish business men with a new-born respect. I listened attentively while Mr. Korfanty, leader of the Polish uprising, explained his successful military coup, which resulted in the Allies granting a plebiscite. My last appointment was with Mr. Kackenbeck, the Belgian judge of the Supreme Silesian Court. I told him why I was writing on the Silesian Frontier.

"Go back to America," he said. "The Polish-German frontier has been established by law. Further legal problems surrounding it are being handled by the Courts."

"You really think I can't do anything about it?"

"You will be sorry if you try," and as if to prick my self-confidence, he went on, "if you believe in settlement by law, you will attempt a learned treatise which no one will read. Or, if you believe in the possibility of change by force of propaganda, you could write a popular and amusing bit of journalism but not a University thesis. Whichever you do will benefit the Germans. Opening the question, even to support the present frontier, gives Germany free publicity."

"Why Germany?"

"Germany wants the frontier changed. Arguing the pros and cons implies the possibility of turning a part or even the entire province over to them."

My self-confidence was now completely gone. "You think there is no ground for discussion?"

"Not," he emphatically replied, "when the principle of Law and the right of self-determination is involved. You are wasting your time looking for it."

"Tell me," he added, "who put you up to writing this?"

"Some friends in England." And I told him the whole story.

"That's the difficulty of laymen meddling in legal affairs, even with the best will in the world. Do stay for dinner, if you like Haydn. My colleagues from the Court will be here this evening, we play quartets every Thursday. Last week,

Brahms ; next week, Mozart. During the year, we read through quite a bit. It's the great compensation for living in Beuthen."

On the way home that evening, I asked the chauffeur to drive me to the telegraph office. There were two telegrams to be sent , one to John in London, the other to Madame Kostanecka in Warsaw. Both said "LEAVING BY THE FIVE O'CLOCK TRAIN TOMORROW ARRIVING LONDON SATURDAY."

I met Madame Kostanecka on the train just as we had arranged. The minute we reached London, I told John that I was giving up my work.

"After all you have done ?"

"How can I write it ?" I told him of my conversation with Mr. Kackenbeck, and explained my fear of turning out propaganda.

"You can base your thesis on statistics. I will help you with them "

"But how could I be sure I had all the figures ?"

For answer, he showed me the introduction he had written, limiting the scope and object of my work.

"The English don't want a book showing they drew a good frontier," I insisted. "They apparently want to mobilize world opinion behind a peaceful return to Germany of everything she lost in the World War."

John hugged me. "What a Pole you have become ! You don't believe in appeasement !"

CHAPTER 4

WE WERE married in June 1927 a few days after John received his PH D. in Economics from the University of London. He was only 25 when he passed his examinations for a PH D. and he had completed the work in record time even though during a summer vacation he had served on the Kemmerer commission. Before coming to London he had graduated in Law from the University of Cracow. However, he still had to finish his military training in Cracow. He was to report to the army at the end of the summer. Nevertheless we decided to be married and go to the United States for a brief honeymoon so that John could meet the rest of my family. I begged him to look into opportunities for an international banker hoping he would like the United States enough to remain here forever. He seemed at that time utterly absorbed in the problems of the international money market. I was confident his term of military service would be short because he had served in the Polish-Bolshevik War, and that we could leave Poland after a few months.

My father was astonished when I told him of my plan. "John has all the qualities that especially fit him for diplomacy," he protested, "I should think Poland would have need of his services."

"John has promised to try living in the United States."

"All the same," he warned, "I think he would be happier in a diplomatic career."

"Diplomacy isn't a serious career!" I replied very smugly. "We will be back — you will see!" I did not for an instant contemplate remaining long in Poland nor had I the slightest intention of becoming a Pole.

I said farewell light-heartedly, and sailed down the Bay, certain that we would be back within six or eight months. But later, as we passed the white cliffs of Dover, a cold chill went through me. Landing in Germany suddenly assumed portentous dimensions, as if I had stepped around the corner of the world. For the first time the waves of the sea were no longer a gentle link with home.

The train for Poland left Berlin after midnight and arrived at Cracow the next morning. The whole family was at the station to meet us. They had to my dismay reserved three of those stiff-seated Austro Daimler cars. "I can't ride in one of those autos," I pleaded, unable to hide my misery. "They always make me nervous and car-sick."

"She is tired from the trip, poor darling," said my mother-in-law offering to take me in a *dorozka*.

In the lazy autumn sun, the market carts jolted peacefully over the cobbled streets. Nursemaids in peasant skirts and ribbon streamers on their caps pushed their perambulators through the park along which we drove. The flower boxes on balconies and baskets hung around the lamp posts were sprawling in abundant autumn shabbiness, but in the Park the stiffly planted flowers were still banked in neat and formal designs around the fountains.

"With a few days' rest, you will feel better," my mother-in-law assured me, "and if not, we will call in Dr. Rosner. He brought John and Michael into the world." She put her arm about me and kissed my cheek.

As we turned the now familiar corner, the maids, who must have been peeking through the curtains, ran out on the sidewalk to greet us, with tears of emotion in their eyes, each repeating a well-rehearsed speech of welcome. John's and my hands were kissed again and again, and we were swept triumphantly into the house, and up the stairs.

In John's room bowls of roses were on every table. First one, then the other repeated, "This is your room, now you must rest," and, smiling with the joy of having John to themselves, they closed the door. John had left me, speaking a language I did not understand. To have come so far to be

alone in this room ! How quickly the welcome was over ! How really alone I was, because of his speaking Polish ! "Everything will have to be explained to me patiently, as to a deaf person," I said to myself. "It's only in Poland that I would have no part in things. I won't stay here ! I won't spend my life sharing nothing, counting for nothing. We must go back to America — we must," I said over and over to myself. "I can't stay here — England — America — John has promised it." I jumped out of bed and ran to the door. "John," I called wildly

He came at once. I tried to tell him how lonely I felt, the loneliness of being without a country, but I burst into tears. He was frightened "Of course we will go back. Father thinks because I did eleven months in the Bolshevik War, that I won't have to serve long now. If I had done twelve months then I wouldn't have to do anything and could get into the Reserve Officers' Corps now."

I couldn't listen to what he was saying, nor could I find the words to explain why his speaking Polish should have been such a shock. "You've heard me speak Polish before."

"Then you were just talking to your friends. This is part of me," I said. "If we are one, then you can't speak Polish if I can't speak Polish. What you say is part of me. You are speaking for us."

My mother-in-law opened the door. "I've asked them to bring up John's and your luncheon. I think you will feel like being alone."

After three days, one could no longer say, "She is tired after her long trip." I was still feeling ill.

Dr Rosner was called. Like his daughter Mary, whom I had met before, he spoke excellent English. He subscribed to the American medical journals. As professor at the University, he was head of a large clinic, and had enormous experience. The whole family assembled to hear his diagnosis. He thought there could be no doubt, though it was too soon to be certain, but if his supposition was correct, I should not travel for the next three months. He was very old-fashioned, he admitted, but he couldn't with a clear con-

science have me leave Cracow sooner. "There is too much danger of miscarriage," he had said. "With a first child you can never know. During the first and the last three months I couldn't advise your crossing the ocean."

Everything depended upon John's leaving the Army as soon as possible, so that when the three months were ended we could leave for the United States. "Why don't you use pull?" I implored. "You don't have to serve, do you?"

"Just because we *could* use pull, Father doesn't want me to," was his firm reply.

John went up for medical examination. The examiner, an old pupil of my father-in-law's was surprised to see him. "I understand you are just married. Why don't you put off your service for a year or so?" he asked. This was one of the ways of avoiding military service until some present work was finished. If you knew the right person, you could get the term put off year by year until outside the military age. But it would mean appearing every year in the district, or else evading the law. Neither of us wanted that. It seemed more sensible to finish now.

John entered the barracks as an ordinary soldier. On the first day, the recruits pledged allegiance to Poland. The atheists swore separately, not having to put their hands on the Bible, as did the Jews and Catholics.

The barracks were in Lobzow, at the end of the street-car line that ran near our house. Here and there along the road was a store built into an apartment house, but most of the buildings were one-family dwellings set back at different angles. Many of the owners kept bees and a goat tied to an apple tree and pigeons in a dovecote of rough boards and wire. In every yard were chickens. The clucking of hens, the whirl of the sewing machines was only occasionally broken by the noise of the trolleys. This street would have seemed shabby however neatly each garden had been kept for the road was unpaved, the sidewalk of broken slates.

Every afternoon, taking the dogs, I would walk the mile to the Barracks and back. A cold wind blew the leaves from the trees but the sun shone brightly and the sky was blue.

"The beautiful Polish Autumn," everyone told me. From far off I could hear the soldiers coming — the whole column singing marching songs to keep in step. About once a week John had a few hours leave, then we would hurry back in the street car. From the moment we entered it, the whole house was in a commotion. While Bronia drew the bath, Kazia made the tea — and old Andzia brushed and cleaned as best she could the bulky khaki uniform. Usually, however, I would slip the box of sandwiches and cookies I had brought into John's hand as he passed in line to the barracks. Then there was about a half hour before supper when he was free to stroll in the broad alleys under the sycamore trees. But if the men were late from drill, I would return home with only the memory of John's sad and gentle smile as he waved his hand in passing.

One day, on one of those long marches, he fainted. The men were singing, as usual. John no longer heard the real words. He had the illusion instead of hearing women's voices, crying over and over, *They are learning to murder. They are learning to kill. They are learning to murder. They are learning to kill*." He regained consciousness after he had been put on the cart of a passing peasant. Lying on the straw, he was driven to the hospital. From there, the doctor, a pupil of my father-in-law's, telephoned.

"Why couldn't he say right off what's the matter," Professor Kostanecki fumed while putting on his coat. "Has a taxi been sent for? That doctor apologizes as if he could have prevented it!" Kissing me tenderly on the forehead, my father-in-law promised to get permission for me to go with him to see John in the morning. "There is not reason to be upset. John has only fainted," he kept repeating.

I found John the next day lying in bed in a huge ward. They had shaved off all his hair. Around him, most of the beds were vacant. Young soldiers were sauntering about the long corridors in their bathrobes. The doctor seemed to be very agitated, speaking first to me, then to the Professor, then again to me, though of course I understood not one word of what was said. We made a very brief call, just long enough

for me to learn the doctors had taken his blood count, made a metabolism test, a cardiograph, and still other tests. With all this there was a chance that John might be discharged from the Army.

"If, indeed, John has a heart weakness, they should discharge him," said Professor Kostanecki, once we were in the taxi on the way home. "But all this is complicated, by the doctors wanting to do me a favor. Now I do not wish to be obligated to Dr. P. His nephew will appear for examinations; then Dr. P. will ask me to see that he passes. I would give a lot for this not to have happened."

John was kept in the hospital for nearly a week, at the end of which time he was discharged from the Army. Category D was stamped in his military booklet, with the explanation, "Cardiac weakness." I was very worried, and in spite of the family's reassurances, I wanted him to be examined by the family doctor. The verdict put my mind at rest. John had no serious heart illness.

For months John had longed to show me Warsaw. At last we were free to go there. There was nothing to keep us in Cracow any longer. In the second week of November the autumn sky had gone grey with the coming of winter and the ground was frozen hard. The afternoon train was white with frost as it thundered into the little station of Cracow. Threads of ice were festooned about the springs and wheels. In the carriages, heavy smoky pieces of felt were hooked up to the windows. Thick ice gradually crept up the glass until after an hour or so it had covered the whole pane. John's mother had given me her traveling pillow and cashmere traveling rug for my knees. "With all the getting in and out of trains, there is always a draft," she told me. As the train slowly pulled out of Cracow, John made me stand in the window to have a final look at the Wawel, the Acropolis of Cracow, whose medieval towers seemed to rise out of a sea of mist and smoke which hung low over the city. Even after the city was hid from view by fields of little grassy mounds, the Wawel spires seemed mysteriously to hang from heaven like an ethereal crown.

Soon we were running along the line of beautiful little wooded hills. Only the hemlocks in the wintry evening seemed alive beside the great dead plain, that stretched to the faint horizon of jagged chalk cliffs, now eerie white below the dark grey sky. On a little rising above a village of log cabins was a little one-story house, with an immense tile roof covered with lichen. Four unimposing columns supported a simple pediment above the front door.

"That is my dream house," John whispered. "When we are old, we will buy it and end our days there. There is a garden and an old boxwood hedge which leads to the forest. From time immemorial, this has been the gateway to Poland. From the time of the Romans, people have walked over this ground."

John never lived to buy the house, and the Germans chose this spot for the opening of their campaign of 1939.

The lights were turned on in the carriage. Suddenly the outside world was blotted out by the frost, which now coated the whole window with gigantic, starry crystals. The dining car steward came through the car, giving out place numbers for dinner.

"Can we have à la carte while dinner is being served?" John asked.

"Naturally," the waiter replied amiably, as though this were the general custom. Yet just across the frontier, in Germany, the waiter would have bellowed, "Naturally not!"

The train seemed to crawl with infinite slowness along its track. As there was only one line of rail, it had to wait at the sidings for the train coming in the opposite direction to pass. In those days it took eight hours to go from Cracow to Warsaw, a journey of about 225 miles. Once the second track was completed, the trip could be made in six. Later, when a more direct route was opened up by way of Radom, you could make the trip in three hours, in a modernistic plush and chromium Diesel engine car.

As it was, we arrived at midnight, tired and cramped, for the cars had been so crowded that we had not been able to walk about. The Warsaw station at midnight was just as full

of peasant families as when I had first seen it in 1925. Every bench was crowded, and even the floor was occupied, except for a narrow passage, through which we stepped in single file to the door. Children were sleeping on piles of bedding, while their parents sat silent, holding their heads in both hands. "They are probably taking up new holdings under the Land Reform Bill," John explained in answer to my question about them.

Outdoors, snow falling heavily muted every sound, and only at the crossings, *dorozki* drivers' sharp cries of warning broke the silence. We drove to the hotel where John and his family always stayed, and had to wait in the line of taxis before the door. There was only one room the manager could give us, at \$12 for the night. "The carnival began early," he apologized. That it was in full swing was plain to be seen, and judging by the sounds of music, more than one dance was in progress. Mothers and daughters in evening dress were hurrying through the hall, making last-moment adjustments. Men buttoning their white kid gloves were dashing through the crowd, the most serious expressions on their faces.

"No use running about looking for a room at this hour!" John said emphatically. "And at least here we will be comfortable."

Our room was not as flamboyant as the one I had had on my first trip to Warsaw. But with all its blue silk damask portieres and coverings, its little carved and gilt chairs and tables with marble tops, the effect was far from cozy. On the beds were those hard and unyielding pad-like quilts, to which stiffly starched sheets were buttoned. It was proper to wrap yourself up in them, but when I tried, I only created a funnel which drew the draughts about me! By tucking the traveling rug crossways, I finally managed to keep covered, but I marveled at John's ability to prevent his counterpane from sliding sideways or crossways to the floor.

During the long sleepless hours, I submitted weakly to bitter generalizations, trying to find in this hotel room a reflection of Poland. I knew my parents-in-law always trav-

eled with their own sheets and blankets. I had frequently heard my father-in-law speak of "the barbaric eastern custom" of using woolen bed pads. Yet I imagined that this room had been designed to please a pretentious aristocracy. "This is their idea of Paris without any of its comforts," I reflected. From time to time I would look at John, sleeping with miraculous tranquility, utterly unaware of my discomfort and that I could not sleep.

Yet I was awakened in the morning by the sound of John's voice. He was talking on the telephone, and speaking Polish as if the sound of his own language were a pure delight to him. He made call after call, taking notes on a little pad after each conversation. When he saw I was awake, he remarked happily, "Everybody is in town. It looks as if we would be out for every meal. My deaf aunt from Rome — the one with all the daughters — is on this corridor, and so is my cousin Wladzio from Posen, with his wife. I'll run in to see them before breakfast. Uncle Anthony suggests meeting him before going there for lunch, at the wedding of Zdzisiz Grabski an old friend of mine you met the first time you were in Cracow. I told the aunts we would see them tomorrow."

"Tomorrow? Will there be time? I thought we were invited somewhere for lunch."

Without further explanation, John went on, "Tomorrow evening there is a musicale at the Raczynski's. Tuesday the Czetwertynski's are having a ball. Wednesday the Palais Blue Ball will be opened for the first time since the war. Thursday the Borowski's are giving a party. Friday the President is having a reception at the Lazienki for the new American financial adviser to the Polish Government, Mr. Charles Dewey. I hear they have the rooms next to ours."

"Are people pleased at having an American financial adviser?"

"Of course, silly! Ring for breakfast when you are ready. I'll just be a minute."

I chose the button decorated with a picture of a waiter, and when he appeared, asked for "*petit déjeuner*" — "break-

fast" — "*Frühstück*." He in turn asked me questions in Polish, and since neither of us had come to any understanding, flourishing his napkin, he bowed and left. An hour later, fully dressed and decidedly hungry, I was wondering whether to leave John a note and go downstairs for breakfast, when John and the waiter reappeared simultaneously, the latter carrying a well-laden tray.

"I found the waiter in the hall. How clever of you to have ordered eggs!" John said, devouring the minute rolls with honey, and gulping down several tiny cups of coffee with whipped cream. "If only it had been double portions! Don't forget to order them, tomorrow." Without waiting for me to tell him that I hadn't ordered the eggs, he began translating the newspaper headlines "Daszynski had made a speech in Parliament attacking Slawek. Slawek, you know, is a friend of Jas, my cousin, who has just been elected to the Sejm. You are sure to meet him at the party Jas is giving next week. Don't get him confused with Daszynski, whom you'll see at the Dvernicks's."

"Then tell me more about them"

John went on, "They both started as members of the Socialist Party. Now Slawek is leader of the non-partisan group supporting Pilsudski. Once you see him, you will never forget him. He has a terrible scar on his face, made by a bomb which exploded in his face when he was working in the Polish underground movement about 1910. Later Pilsudski trained him as a member of the Bojowka, disciplined guerilla fighters, capable of offering really effective resistance to Russia and Germany. During the war, he became an officer in the Polish Army.

"Daszynski is Marshal of the Diet, and leader of the Socialist Party. From the tone of his speeches, you would never think the Socialists had urged Pilsudski to come back into active politics in the Coup of 1926. When the Diet refused to have Slawek as Marshal of the Sejm, Pilsudski resigned as Prime Minister. Now, as Marshal, Pilsudski is Inspector of the Army."

"Have you forgotten about the wedding?" I interrupted.

"We won't be late if you hurry." John led the way down seemingly endless corridors. The Hotel Europe had been built in the era of Napoleonic magnificence, and covered all four sides of a large square. But there was only one stairway, and our room was two long blocks away from it.

"Can we take a sleigh?" I begged, as we ran along. "It would be such fun." You could hear the bells dancing merrily. They sounded romantic and foreign.

"Would it be fun in the city?" John's voice sounded doubtful but he yielded.

The taxicab drivers who stood beside their cars clearly showed that if we preferred a sleigh to an automobile, we were unworthy of their further attention. They made loudly disparaging remarks as we were buttoned up to the chin under a pungent smelling fur rug, and laughed scornfully as, with a crack of the whip, our driver flung the sleigh into the New World Street. The horse was urged into the perilously narrow passage between never-ending lines of trolleys and rattling model-T taxis. On either side of the street was a jumble of houses. Some were weighted down under immense tile roofs, like the village shops. Others were finely decorated, with graceful sheaves of wheat in the cornices, and well-designed moldings. Some had Empire columns, some Louis XVI façades, and breaking the even line, all the Nineteenth-century buildings shot up above their neighbors, leaving unfinished sides gaping and uncovered. You could see the Nineteenth-century business philosophy of "laissez faire" had even reached to Warsaw. Here, as in America, the individual could spoil the outline of the street by building in utter disregard of the style of his neighbor's house.

By the time we reached the Place of the Three Crosses, where the Church of St. Alexander stands perilously in the center of seven radiating streets, the bells were ringing for the wedding ceremony. On the broad steps and high columned porch several hundred people were already waiting. John told the sleigh driver to let us off at the beginning of the Aleje Ujazdowskie the most beautiful street in Warsaw which runs from the Place of the Three Crosses to the Belvedere.

It is lined on either side with a clipped hedge of old beech trees, now fifty feet in height, and a very broad sidewalk flanked by grass-borders. Here many sleighs were parading, as was the custom every morning from twelve to one. Horse-drawn vehicles had congregated from all sections of the city. In the old days, equipage had vied with equipage, to display the finest breeds of horses and the most elegant coach and livery. John's mother's earliest memories had been of sitting on the coach seat beside her mother, whose faultless beauty was saluted by the beaux of Warsaw.

Though the grey mist penetrated the heavy bearskin cover, and I shivered in my fur coat, hundreds of open *dorozki* and sleighs were coursing up and down the streets. In some were courtesans, in others old ladies with their dames de compagnie. Many of the vehicles were shabby old hacks that must have come from the meanest parts of the city, and many carried Jewesses in their old red periwigs. It was now late, and everyone had gone into the church. With difficulty we squeezed inside. Already a thousand persons were pushing towards the altar. There were no ushers, no pews, and although many were well-dressed, there were also peasant women under heavy shawls.

"Are all these people here for the wedding?" I whispered.

"A church is free. Anyone may come in."

"Even to a private wedding?"

"How could you keep people out of a church?" John asked in astonishment. "Besides there is an exceptionally large crowd here because Zdzisz' father was Minister of Finance under Paderewski." After looking about, John whispered, "Most of the Conservative Party are here!"

Everyone had put on a mask of solemnity. No one smiled even when nodding to an acquaintance. Uncle Anthony, when we met him, hardly gave a sign of recognition, immediately resuming his prayers. Since I had not come to pray, my eyes roamed about the scene. The church was unheated, the marble floors wet from the ice and snow which had been tramped in. Though it was so cold you could see your breath, the bride wore no cloak over her white satin dress.

She had no attendants, and someone in the crowd near her picked up her long veil when she moved. Everyone else in the church was in black, the women in tubular coats of Persian lamb, the men in black cloth coats with fur collars, and with fur caps in their hands. At the solemn moment of the Mass, those who could, knelt on the bases of the pillars to be out of the wet. The others bowed down dexterously to avoid the slush.

When the ceremony was over, a few went forward to press the bride's hand, but we, like all those standing near us, turned to the door, as if it were enough to come and pray for the happiness of the young couple.

It was only on the steps of the church that Uncle Anthony greeted us. "Welcome! Welcome to our family!" and taking my arm, he said briskly, "One can't talk in this cold. Let us cross the square to the *Cukiernia*" He coughed significantly as he pulled his muffler up over his mouth and pushed his fur cap down over his ears. He led us into a modest little tea room, saying apologetically, "At least they sell good cakes here, and it's quiet at this hour." We passed through the narrow shop to a side room, where even the morning light could not dispel the gloom of maroon and gilt wallpaper. However the room was well filled. The habitués behaved as if they felt very much at home, hanging their coats against the wall, and choosing the newspapers from the rack, which they studied with concentration, not even glancing up at the girl who took the orders.

John and Uncle Anthony at once discussed the people they had seen at the wedding.

"Raczkiewicz was next to me. He is going back to Poznań."

"What about Radwan?"

"He's back in the Agricultural Bank." Uncle Anthony bent across the table as if he were imparting information of the most clandestine nature.

"Osiecki came in with Kiernik. You don't know him?"

"Who was standing with Stanislaw Grabski?" The ash of Uncle Anthony's half-burned cigarette fell on his jacket.

"Klarner, of course ! Was Janicki there ?"

These names meant no more to me than the strange words printed in the newspapers.

"Yes, he came up to consult with Klarner. They have plans for a new agricultural station in Lubelskie province."

"Old Zychlinski is coming in tomorrow or the next day." It seemed as if they must have mentioned everyone there.

Tea, served in glasses, is very hot. I tried to hold the glass with my glove. Uncle Anthony, who had put a quarter of a glass of sugar into his tea, stirred it absent-mindedly until it became cool. Though both men spoke English, it might as well have been Polish, for they talked of nothing else than who was at the wedding and what they were now doing. From time to time, Uncle Anthony would give me an encouraging smile. "How do you like Warsaw ?" he would ask. Or, "You have a comfortable room ?" But without waiting for the answer, he would mention to John someone else he had seen.

Uncle Anthony and my father-in-law were as similar in stature and features as John and Michael. Yet the way Uncle Anthony drank his tea or held his cigaret showed the absent-minded professor, while Father was meticulous to a fault. Uncle Anthony was gregarious and loved his pupils and colleagues ; Father, though a real political force, preferred solitude and quiet. The two brothers loved each other dearly and by writing daily shared every joy and anxiety.

While Uncle Anthony finished his tea and stood up to pay, John glanced at the newspaper. "It's such a pleasure to read a newspaper where you can get all the information without repetition and a lot of comments," he said.

"The papers look like tabloids," I commented.

"But they are not. They are this small size because they handle more easily. In Warsaw there are twenty-odd dailies of every possible political complexion. They generally carry on a lively debate with their readers and other editors."

We went out and hailed a taxi. Uncle Anthony, like my

father-in-law and Michael, would never take a *dorozka*.

As we drove down the New World Street, John pointed out the façade of a large newly appointed bookstore. "That is my cousin Wladzia's shop. He bought a printing press to publish his own poems! He makes a hobby of fine editions of poetry and artistic prose with a limited sale. Wladzia lived a long time in France and graduated from the Sorbonne."

"His bookstore has the best foreign department in Warsaw," Uncle Anthony said.

As we passed the University, which is on the Copernicus Square, Uncle Anthony, at the point where the New World Street and the Cracow Suburb merge, waving his hand remarked, "Every morning at ten I walk along there to the University. At twelve-thirty I have tea at that *Cukiernia*, and at two I walk home on the opposite side of the street." I could picture him, day in and day out, year in and year out, nothing changing the essential regularity of his routine.

Uncle Anthony had lived on the eighth floor of the same apartment building ever since the house had been built in 1910. After an interminable discussion with the doorman as to whether all of us could ride at once, we went up in a slow-moving lift. Upstairs we were let in by a jolly maid in a house dress and bedroom slippers. You could hear Aunt Anita and the children running about, but the living room was empty. Uncle Anthony took me at once to his windows from which you could see into the steep streets, running down to the Vistula, and beyond, across the river, to the suburbs of Prague and to the black line of pine forest in a circle on the horizon.

"This is where I always sit," he said, "in this bay window. I love to watch that never-ending procession of street cars as they run past day and night. There is the new Poland." I could see that in his deepest soul it gave him a profound joy to look for the new cars, each month more new cars, in a perpetual stream of traffic. All their nickel and glass were kept brightly polished, and the pale blue paint gleamed like new. These street cars moved a million people to work. He had the Socialist's joy of watching a state enterprise prosper.

The bay window was filled with a palm, not as big as the palm in Cracow, yet big enough to fill most of the space. Under it were little stiff chairs and an enormous flat-topped mahogany desk. There was a Steinway concert grand piano. A heavily padded sofa, and three arm chairs, covered in green leather, were grouped about a round tea table. Very fine Oriental rugs were on the floor, and the curtains were Persian shawls. On the side walls, mahogany bookshelves reached to the ceiling. Besides Polish, all the Italian, French, German and English classics were there. Uncle Anthony traced the history of economics back to the thirteenth century, using Dante as his guide, and his scientific writings were to be found in foreign journals.

John pointed out the volumes while Uncle Anthony fretted, "Anita is never ready. Dear, dear — not ready to welcome you. It's the fault of Miss Helen. I always say Miss Helen is so bad for the children. No discipline. Just the other day Miss Helen broke this little piano lamp. She wouldn't let the maid dust it, so now I can't ask you to play. Do you play Chopin? Here is my music."

As we were looking over the music, the children burst into the room, specially dressed, and drilled for the great occasion of greeting me in English. "We are so glad you have come," they said, throwing their arms about me, without the least sign of shyness. And both speaking at once, they let flow a torrent of Polish.

"What are they saying?"

"They want to show you their toys."

"John, why didn't you prepare me? Why have we no toys for them?" I pleaded. "I can't imagine six and ten year old American children making such a fuss over a stranger."

"You are not a stranger. You are their new cousin."

"Yes, we all are so happy you are here," my new aunt said very timidly, giving me a kiss on both cheeks. "The children have been waiting so impatiently all morning. Would you care to see their room?"

"After lunch, perhaps," I said, looking at my watch. It was nearly two, and I was famished.

"There is plenty of time. Dinner will be at three. Mr. Wieniawski, president of the Commercial Bank, will be here," my hostess told me, as she led the way through an enfilade of rooms. In the corner of one was a loom, on which a half-finished rug was hanging. She would have passed it, had I not paused to exclaim: "What a beautiful and unusual pattern! Where did you find it?"

"I just make it up as I go along. The colors for the wool? I dye it myself from vegetable dyes, of course. Gladly will I show you how to do it. It is so very simple. As soon as you are settled, I will set you up a loom."

The children were tugging at me to come and see all their toys, which had been neatly arranged for my inspection. They had the largest room in the apartment. It was newly whitewashed, and the faded chintz curtains were freshly starched and ironed. In one corner stood a statue of the Virgin, set about with ferns and palms, before which a light was always kept burning. The beds were hidden behind screens, and in the center was a large white table with chairs about it. I had only just sat down with the children when the doorbell rang, and the bank president, a gentleman like those we had seen that morning in church, was announced.

The moment of greeting was solemn, with hardly a smile. While kissing my hand, he said, as if he had rehearsed it, "You are for the first time in Warsaw? You are comfortable in the hotel?" and again without waiting for my reply, he turned and greeted Uncle Anthony and John. The three then moved towards the window, and instantly became oblivious of everyone else in the room.

Having drawn me to the sofa, my new aunt rang for the servant, who entered apologizing that the *kanapki* were not ready. "Miss Helen wishes to do everything herself," she said helplessly. "It's hard to train the others." She fidgeted with embarrassment, until finally she begged to be excused. From time to time John would look up and send me that "I hope you are as happy as I am" smile. The line "They also serve who only stand and wait," went over and over through my mind. I was learning my place, but it was

difficult to sink into it and to fill it gracefully. In Poland, I found, conversation was about specific things ; no one ever spoke in generalizations, nor were the opinions of young people considered interesting. John, his uncle and the bank president were, I knew, engaged in a technical discussion. I would be expected to discuss our immediate plans, my impressions of Warsaw and Cracow. John had more than once made it quite clear to me that a person who indulged in propounding hackneyed theorizing was avoided as a terrible bore.

When Aunt Anita came back, I tried to describe how different everything was in America. She listened politely. When I had finished, she said, "Yes, indeed. Everything will be very different for you here."

I said I did not mean in essential things. "People really are the same everywhere."

"Perhaps," she said doubtfully. "Out there interests are so different. People are occupied with other kinds of problems."

When the maid brought in the sandwiches and *wodka*, the gentlemen joined us. Drawing the three arm chairs together they continued the conversation in which they were so deeply absorbed. They made no pretense of admitting us into their circle. Finally, at half past three, dinner was served. The bank president, Uncle Anthony, John and I sat on one side of the table, while on the other Aunt Anita sat, between the two children to whom she gave her full attention. It was a long meal, consisting of wild duck blood soup, followed by a roast of wild boar with wattle berries, then chicken and a salad. For dessert, there were horns of plenty, made of wafers, filled with candied fruit and cream.

During dinner, John told me that Mr. Wieniawski wanted him to go into the Commercial Bank. He would be trained as secretary of the bank.

"What about America ?" I asked.

"I am sure I could arrange to be sent over there in some capacity," he told me reassuringly.

When, at five, we staggered from the table, it was already

dark. Far across the river, out on the horizon, was a red streak left over by the setting sun, and from the city streets below a myriad of soft lights were twinkling. I sat in the window with the children, who loved to watch the line of trolleys, with their solid bank of lights, while John, Uncle Anthony and Mr. Wieniawski stood in the shadow of the bookshelves, talking softly. When other guests arrived, everyone made a great effort to carry on a general conversation in French. They spoke of the theatre, the various actors I must see, even if I couldn't understand what was said. But one would speak an aside to another in Polish, and bit by bit, the general conversation crumbled away. Then the four men became engaged in a heated discussion, which continued without interruption until midnight, even after the evening tea and sandwiches were brought in.

My new aunt, the lady guest and I were left on the sofa by the tea table, for the men had once more drawn back to the bay window under the palm. The lady, it appeared, was French, but she had learned Polish, which she spoke fluently to my aunt. It was not difficult, she said. She had two boys who spoke French and Polish. It was comforting to think that my children would be able to speak two languages equally well. The lady had many friends in her adopted country, and seemed to be very happy in Warsaw. She loved Poland, and every year she visited her parents in France.

"C'est pas le bout du monde !"

It was difficult to keep up a conversation of questions and answers, especially since the lady seemed so much happier while talking Polish to Aunt Anita. The hands on my watch made so little progress that I thought it must have stopped. I made repeated signals to John, which he refused to see. At last I stood up.

"I'm so very tired. I really must go to bed."

"Why don't you take her to the hotel and come back?" Uncle Anthony suggested to John. "No, no!" I tugged at John's sleeve.

"Will we not see you tomorrow?" Aunt Anita said wistfully.

I said we would join them for lunch tomorrow.

Back at the hotel, as I was undressing, John dropped the bombshell. "Wieniawski is very insistent about my taking that job. It's a perfect beginning. He will arrange to send me to New York to learn the international money market."

"Did you promise to take it?"

"Not without consulting you."

"But you want to take it?" I could see his mind was made up.

"If you can decide to live in Warsaw."

So it was decided.

CHAPTER 5

AS SOON as John signed his contract with the bank, we started the difficult task of finding an apartment. At that time all old apartments were occupied. Rents in the old buildings were frozen at a very low level to protect the tenants from inflation. As a result, people only moved if they were paid a high enough price, enabling them to get a smaller apartment and still pocket a considerable sum. Finding an apartment depended on social connections, first prefaced with a call, then leaving wounded susceptibilities.

In 1927 all houses were in an appalling state of disrepair. Landlords who received about twenty-five dollars a month for an apartment which before the last war had brought them two hundred and fifty were unable to make anything but the most superficial external repairs. The appearance of the interiors of apartments which had not been re-decorated in fifteen years — before the period of the war and occupation — can hardly be imagined.

Though the newer houses were cleaner, they had central heating. This was considered a disadvantage, and everyone assured us the heating system would surely break down during the coldest days of winter.

"In the last war," they said, "it was the people who depended on central heating who suffered the most. If you have a stove you can always find a scrap of wood to burn for an hour or so."

"But there won't be a war now," I would reply.

"Suppose there is a strike and coal isn't delivered. Or suppose one of the other tenants does not pay his share, and

deliveries are stopped. Or suppose the heating system goes to pieces in the cold weather, and you have to wait until the blacksmith makes the new parts!" This was before the factories were rebuilt, and after the Russians and Germans had stolen all the machine tools from Poland. Everyone had recent memories of privation and suffering from the bitter winter cold.

We eventually chose an apartment in a newly built house, even though it had central heating, because the ceilings were not festooned with plaster of Paris scrolls, and the windows and doors were not decorated with wooden caryatids. Four rooms gave off a central hall, and the maids' rooms, kitchen and pantry were down a separate corridor. If we felt somewhat self-conscious at having more room than most friends of our own age, they appeared to rejoice at our good fortune. Many suggested renting a room while moving or re-settling, but we never had visitors for the night, not even guests from out of town. Rooms and beds were so scarce that no one would have presumed to expect such hospitality in the city. Yet everywhere out in the country "the guest is God in the house" as the saying goes, and no one was ever turned away from the door, however poor and meager might be the hospitality available.

We moved into the new apartment while the workmen were still painting it. Once it was ours we were anxious to be settled. Every day we combed antique shops, with the result that we had a fine collection of old brass chandeliers and silver platters before we had found anything comfortable to sit on! My husband would not spend money on anything new, not even a simple chair. "It's just pure waste!" he would say, buying a capo di monte figurine, or a fine piece of brocade to hang on the wall. Judging by the few Eighteenth-Century chairs that survived, the Poles of those days must have sat very prim and upright. As we appeared doomed forever either to sit about the dining room table or on the seven-foot square ottoman, which also served as a bed, John's family offered us a whole attic full of shapeless old stuffed chairs and sofas. "Some can be upholstered in leather ap-

propriate to a man's den," said my father-in-law, "and others in silk damask to go in your living room."

John refused to be cajoled from his conviction that arm chairs in a room full of antiques should be treated in a temporary manner with slip covers of printed linen. But in all Warsaw I could find no self-respecting upholsterer who had ever made or even seen a slip cover. The several I called in refused to take money for creating anything so amateurish.

"No, Madame. They will slide and tear."

"The room will look like a rats' nest."

"Now if Madame would let me nail on the cloth with a heavy fringe and tassels!"

In the end I found a seamstress, and together we made all the slip covers and curtains in the house ourselves.

John hired our cook Makowska because, he said, "You could see she had an instinctive feeling for antiques." She had lived in a wing of the old Royal Palace, now being arranged as a museum, where her husband cleaned and polished the beautiful parquet floors and stored away rugs and hangings brought out for receptions. They had first come to Warsaw when the Germans bombed the village where they lived. Their little girl had been born prematurely while the houses about them were in flames. Though their livestock had been plundered, and nothing remained but their land, they still dreamed of going back to the country and re-building their home. Now, though the husband had a good salary of forty dollars a month, and two rooms in the *oficina* of the palace, the wife wanted to earn twenty dollars as a cook, to put away for re-building the farm.

She told me how she had walked the forty miles to Warsaw with her new-born baby. She had started off in their cart with a few possessions. The Germans came nearer. They began shelling the road crowded with refugees. Her husband made her jump down from the cart and run into the field. At that moment they became separated. She went on like a crazy person, following the other refugees, having nothing to eat, and holding the child to her breast to keep it warm, and wrapping the wet diapers about her loins to dry

them. When she came to Warsaw, she did not know where to go. She had never been there before in her life. She tried to remember what she had been told about the city. Her mother had done washing for a Countess Rose. She would go there. It took her two days to find the house, and she was four days without food. When she came to Countess Rose, her husband was there. It was surely a miracle of God.

If I would hire her at the very high wage of twenty dollars, she would take nothing from the "basket." In the early morning when the peasants drove their carts to the edge of the city she would buy potatoes and other winter vegetables and wood for the stove.

Makowska had learned some German during the occupation. She begged me to teach her English. Her ambition was to be a housekeeper and hold the keys to the larder. From the first day she came to us, no matter what was lost, she would say, "Nothing can disappear completely from the house." With these comforting words, the disrupting search would be ended. A week later she would triumphantly produce the missing object. She would never let me take a parlor maid unless she had references from the few bourgeois or aristocratic families that measured up to her standard of "right and proper." If the former mistress was known for her love affairs, or had lived beyond her means, she would say, "Such people are too lenient with their servants. Madame would never be satisfied."

Makowska took the keenest personal interest in all objects bought for the household. When she found that I had ordered mattresses from an upholsterer, she was dismayed. "How can you know what they will be filled with? You order horsehair, but they can stuff it with seaweed, for all you know. We must buy the hair and have it done at home."

She plagued me until, dressed in our oldest clothes, we took a *dorozka* and drove across town where the Jewish wholesale shops were located. These were in the Ghetto, established under Russian domination. During the years of Poland's freedom the Reformed Jews moved into the finest

streets uptown and many of our literary and artist friends moved down into this ancient picturesque district. But in 1927 the Jewish section still looked like an oriental bazaar. Brass shops in one street, tin shops in another, streets of carpenters and streets of shops with old furniture, streets of furriers and of cloth merchants. Finally we came to the street of the horsehair merchants! It was very narrow, and we were constantly shoved off the sidewalk into the midst of pushcarts hauling bathtubs, pipes, furniture, great lengths of wire, piles of paper. Straining at the shaft, one Jew pulled while others pushed. They were spattered with mud, ragged and unshaven.

On every window ledge, women were leaning, though nothing unusual was happening on the streets. People swarmed from the houses like ants. Those who overflowed the houses jammed the shops, some sitting, others standing at the counters. All were engaged in heated conversations. No one made a move to wait on us until Makowska told them what we wanted to buy. Only when we started to leave, they would grab at us.

"You leave me go, you good-for-nothing! I would not buy that dirty hair if you made me a present of it!" Makowska appeared so angry that I was frightened, until I learned her technique.

"Not take my beautiful hair! It's fit for a princess to sleep upon. You would not recognize the quality of the fine hair I have. The lady never held the like of it in her hand." The merchant held the strand above his caftan.

"I would not touch it — it's too dirty," Makowska spat out.

"Dirty! The purest white Arabian horsehair," the salesman's voice rose to a shriek as he dangled the braid above Makowska's head.

"Not good enough," she told him. "We must be going."

Someone else caught her arm and held aloft another strand for her inspection. Still she shook her head and dragged me from the shop. Having spent two or three hours going through all the shops down one side of the street, and

coming back up the other side, I was faint and ready to leave.

"We've seen it all," she consoled me. "Which does Madame consider the best?"

"I can't possibly remember."

"Then, if Madame will permit, I will go into that shop over there, the third on the left. Does Madame wish to come in while they weigh it?"

"If they can be quick."

"It may take an hour or so," she warned.

"Oh, no," I said, "I will give you the money. Direct the *dorozka* to our street. I want to go home."

Hours later Makowska arrived home in a *dorozka*, sitting on a bale of glossy hair, her hat awry, but otherwise as fresh as when we had set out that morning.

Until I really spoke Polish sufficiently well to go shopping alone, everything I bought for the house was just as exhausting as buying the hair for the mattresses, whether it was the curtain rods of solid brass or the cord that was to pull them, the cloth for the servants' clothes, or their sheets and towels. It took an hour's bargaining to settle the spending of a dollar. Our linens, fortunately, were bought in shops where someone spoke a little French, and I could go alone. My husband's aunts had advised one place for fine sheets, another for those of a more ordinary quality, and a third for towels and napkins. The shops were like warehouses, with stock piled to the ceiling. Everything was tied up in paper and tapes. There was a bewildering choice of qualities. No sooner would I settle on a pattern, and it would be measured than the desired amount was found lacking.

"Yes, this is very fine," they would explain to me apologetically. "It is stock made before the war for the old Russian trade. Our Polish factories today cannot even keep up with the orders for cottons that come in, everything is so depleted."

I was shown samples of Czech and French linens. Had I been buying five years later I should have had the finest Polish linens to choose from, as it was I took the Czech. Everything had to be made by hand, and was delivered piece

by piece. It took two months for my whole order to be delivered.

I was never to cease marveling at the streak of perfectionism in the Polish character. So many things were kept from being done at all, that could have been just tidied over. When a high road was repaired, its very foundations were replaced, and once a house was built it was supposed to last forever. Even the Polish peasant wanted nothing but the best in cloth and boots, and spent hours in the choice of those few items which he purchased. My husband would never buy the simplest items for the house unless they met his exacting requirements in every respect. It was three years before we had any little tables in our drawing rooms, or a small old meat platter — there was no question of buying a copy! It was ten years before we bought a dining room rug, though during that time we constantly searched in Poland and many parts of Europe. The ideal rug had been bought by a cousin from under our very nose, and nothing else was fine enough, big enough, or somber enough in color and design.

One day I was seized with an excruciating pain and high fever. The doctor was summoned immediately and at first we hoped the pains would pass and all would soon be well. But after a few days he insisted I should be transported by ambulance to a hospital. The baby, it seemed, was pressing against my kidneys, an operation might become necessary. The small private hospital to which I was taken had been established on several floors of an ordinary apartment house, and John chose what must have been designed as the living room. My bed was an after thought. In the large bay window stood a dining room table with six chairs around it. There was a sofa on which John slept, two easy chairs, a desk, a chaise-longue and a couch for the night nurse, a wash stand and medicine tables behind screens. All patients were allowed their own bedding and as I was rolled down the corridor, I had glimpses of the magenta or yellow satin quilts with those lace trimmed voile covers so frequently displayed in linen shop windows.

After a few days when it became apparent I was gravely

ill, John engaged the adjacent room so that his mother who had hurriedly arrived from Cracow, could also remain in the hospital day and night. During the day John read aloud the *American Tragedy* and at night he sat by my bedside stroking my forehead. When he dropped from weariness his mother was there to whisper caressing endearments. Both of them helped with the nursing. As the situation grew worse, my father-in-law who at first had come only for the week-ends, left his University students in the hands of an assistant and remained in Warsaw. He searched the shops for different kinds of biscuits and fruits to tempt my appetite. When he found that pineapples at the equivalent of six dollars apiece were what pleased me most, he combed all the stores in town. He bought ice creams from all the various caterers hoping one would be better than the other. "Americans do like ices, do they not?" he would anxiously inquire.

Every day Uncle Anthony and his children came to inquire how I was doing. They stood behind the screens for fear of intruding. Wojtek drew pictures to paste on the wall over my bed and Zosia sewed lace ruffles to a pillow for the new little baby.

Because of my father-in-law's position as Dean of the Cracow Faculty of Medicine, the greatest specialists from all over Poland offered their services. The line of physicians about my bed grew longer with each consultation. They gave little hope for my recovery and urged that my parents, be sent for. Every day for six weeks the fever rose to 105. When all the known methods for checking it failed, the gynecologist declared nothing was left but to take the child. It was then the eighth month and they feared a general infection would set in.

When the operation was over, I could feel the hot tears flowing. They wet the pillow and made me cough. I wept from weakness and exhaustion, despair and frustration. I was even unable to read. When finally I could crawl about my room and reach the window, spring was nearly over. Lilacs in the dooryard below managed to lift their fragrance above the ether-filled hospital air. Men passing in the street

had thrown their coats wide open, and women in blouse and skirt carried their shawls on their arms. At last we could leave in an open *dorozka*.

Without pressing the point, on the way home John asked, "Would you like to take Polish lessons? It would be well if you kept yourself very busy."

One of the teachers in the primary school, which Uncle Anthony's son, Wojtek attended, said she would teach me. Her name, translated, means Miss "Book." She spoke no English and she taught in the public school every day until two. But she felt it her mission to give me a thorough foundation in Polish. Her father had been a teacher during the years of Russian occupation when teaching Polish History carried the death penalty. Like hundreds of other Polish teachers, he had been shot at the citadel. Her tiny frame weighed less than a hundred pounds but her zeal for teaching gave her the strength she needed to follow his heroic career. She was well-read in theory and method of teaching and spurned the old-fashioned way of learning words — "The pencil is red — the canary is yellow." Instead she plunged immediately into the household accounts that had accumulated during the last six months. From working over them I learned the names of objects in the larder and soon I could order a meal.

I was so proud of my new achievements that I tried to give orders in Polish even before guests. I lost an excellent maid by trying to ask for the dessert knives — instead I said, "Put your foot on the table here." She ran to the kitchen in tears. Makowska could not console her, even when she explained, "When Madame asks for the bedbugs, meaning to ask for thumb tacks, I do not take offense."

We used the Polish school text books, and I learned to read from the primer. Within a few months I had reached the third grade. As soon as I was able to understand a little conversation, Miss "Book" invited me to tea. She lived in a tiny flat, consisting of a living room, kitchenette and bath. The walls, the floor and a large ottoman were covered with *kilims*, which are woven like American Indian rugs. The

ottoman has the appearance of a big upholstered box. At night it is used as a bed and, with the bedding put away, by day it serves as a sofa. Four highly polished mahogany chairs stood around a brightly polished mahogany table in front of the window. On the walls were photographs of Switzerland and Italy and an etching of a Polish mountaineer. Decorative pieces of Polish pottery stood on top of a bookshelf containing a few Polish classics. Hers was the room of the Polish city-dweller of small means and modest taste, neat and clean, where "even a fly couldn't sit," as the saying goes.

When Miss "Book" first came to me, she was one of twelve teachers at the public primary school near our house. During the ten years I knew her, she advanced to the rank of principal. There were between seven and eight hundred children in this school. There were thirty in a class, the grades were subdivided into sections according to reading ability ; those who could learn to read by whole sentences, those who could only learn a word at a time, and those who could learn to read only by syllables.

This teaching technique and the regulation which did not permit children starting school before they were seven years old, are I am told, advanced theories in pedagogy put into practice by only a few schools in the United States. Poles believed that, before attending school, all children should have seven years of play in the open air. Even the poorest women were out with their infants in the bitterest weather, and there seemed to be more perambulators on the streets and in the parks than here in America. The pre-school children were taken care of in big playgrounds, where they were divided into age groups for supervised outdoor play. If a child's birthday fell a month after the fall term began, he had to wait until the following year to commence school. It was felt that the healthy child could learn more quickly and concentrate better on his work in later years, than if he had started school before the age of seven.

During my lessons, Miss "Book" explained this theory to me and she also told me about the public school routine. Immediately on arriving there was inspection of hands, nails

and teeth. For the very poor, who couldn't afford tooth-brushes, the Parents-Teachers Association had its funds which were discreetly administered. Every morning each child brought his six cents for the lunch of milk, vegetable stew and fruit. The stew was cooked and prepared by the mothers in turn throughout the winter. Those too poor to pay even the six cents were given it free. The children themselves devised the plan that when they marched in line to give the teacher the money, even the ones who could not pay stood in line, so that no one could know who paid and who did not. The poorest women volunteered most eagerly to help with the cooking and the serving.

The Parents-Teachers Club at her school met on Fridays. The teachers prepared little talks about child hygiene and the latest theories of education. They met in the roughly plastered and whitewashed basement dining room, which was furnished with the simplest wooden benches and tables. Here they also made clothes for the needy of the school, from the materials bought with the proceeds of the entertainments and assembly days, or from old clothes donated for the purpose. They were as grateful for small gifts as if one had offered them a fortune.

Corporal punishment, freely practised in other parts of the continent, was not allowed in Poland. Once when she was preparing a Friday talk on punishment, Miss "Book" showed me with horror a booklet of regulations in German for German state schools, which sanctioned not only beating, but locking children in dark rooms

Once a month delegates from all the Warsaw primary schools and the principals met to discuss not only their special problems, but also the latest educational theories from abroad. Articles from American journals were translated and read to the teachers. Every few years, the teachers were compelled to attend summer school.

With so many extra-curricular duties, the teachers were naturally very much overworked. They had to accept harrowing salary cuts. Moreover, the Government economized on the number of substitute teachers, for teachers could not

be trained as fast as new school houses were built. In every community the one outstanding building was the new school. Poland at one time was the only country in Europe with a larger budget for education than for military service.

Because of having compulsory sickness insurance, when the teachers were ill they could have six weeks' treatments in semi-private hospitals rooms. This provision was fortunate for teachers like Miss "Book" who lived alone. She told me how she had nearly died of appendicitis — luckily, when she had not turned up for school, one of the teachers had gone over to see what was the matter. The teacher was able to call an ambulance and get her to the hospital just in time. Had they needed first to find a doctor, it would have been too late. As it was, once Miss "Book" had recovered from a ruptured appendix, she went to a convalescent home built especially for teachers. It was in the forest outside Warsaw, and administered by the State Sick Insurance. The room which was allotted to her had folding glass doors, which in good weather were thrown open to a loggia. Chintz curtains and wicker chairs distinguished it from the rooms in other hospitals. After six weeks she returned to Warsaw, but she still went twice a week to be baked by diathermy. From her description, it sounded as if half of the population of Warsaw went in for these treatments, and indeed diathermy must have been very popular in the new Polish medicine. My maid who developed housemaid's knee was prescribed a daily baking. Every afternoon I was obliged to give her the time off until she was pronounced cured. Nor had I the right of dismissing her unless I gave her board wages for the whole period.

Any servant needing a tooth filling, or eyeglasses, or any of the pleasures afforded by the medical profession, could spend hours out of the house receiving free treatment at the clinics. All of them received free sick insurance, old age and unemployment insurance, which cost me six or seven dollars a month per servant, according to their wages. To evade the insurance was a Court offense. The servant received in-

demnity and the right to the services of a State attorney free of charge, if such evasion was discovered. My husband's salary was also taxed for sick, old age and unemployment insurance. When tragedy befell me I was offered the choice of payment by a lump sum or a monthly dividend, though indeed I never asked for it. Everyone in the country could make use of these services.

The English Consul might have died when he had a heart attack in my garden had it not been for the city health doctor who spoke English and also read the American medical journals. Since the situation was serious, he remained until our own physician could be found. Being Sunday, it was hours before we were able to reach the great heart specialist who, when he did finally arrive, had nothing more to offer.

One morning Makowska arrived at her home to find a crowd standing around the doorway. The heartrending shrieks of her little girl rang down the corridor. Rushing into her apartment, she found her old mother tearing cloth with which to bandage the child's head. "Are you mad, Mother?" she cried. "Run to the pharmacist's and have him send the first aid man." Quickly the ambulance came and the child was taken to the hospital. She had spinal meningitis, and was delirious for weeks. She remained nearly three months in the hospital. During those anxious days I saw little of Makowska. She did our marketing every day at dawn, before the hospital allowed visitors, because, as she explained, "Mother is too old to bargain, but she will cook for you." In the evening she would return and triumphantly report on the visit her daughter had had from one of the greatest doctors in the city.

The sick of the whole country were tended by doctors sent out by the Department of Health. Out in the country few had health insurance, but disease was treated as the concern of the State. In this way malaria and typhus were stamped out, and typhoid reduced to negligible proportions. Poland was the first country in Europe to establish socialized medicine.

Every child had to be vaccinated against smallpox before it was six months old. When our child was born, the doctor warned us that if we didn't let him vaccinate Andrew the health officers would come to do it themselves. The child was born on the 25th of January ; on the 25th of July the health officer arrived. Had I not been able to show the scar, proving that it had already been done, he would have been vaccinated on the spot. In order to enter any school a child had not only to be vaccinated for smallpox once again, but also for diphtheria. Typhoid inoculation was also compulsory.

Artesian wells were put down in the villages and old fashioned wells condemned as unsanitary. In those days the great circles of concrete lining the wells were a familiar sight all over the country. In many districts a little red cross by the edge of the highway gave the name of the next village where a doctor was available. It is difficult to exercise sufficient health control in a rural community, but in spite of criticism, much was done that had never been done before. Free medicine and free serums were as much a part of the State program as free education. The little hospitals in the small towns were primitive and insufficient, but clean — remarkably so, considering the general poverty of the country.

There was much complaint that the sick insurance companies were too rich and powerful, that they took too large a percent of the salaries, that in a poor country simpler buildings would have been adequate. "Why," it was asked repeatedly, "should corridors of their buildings be faced in polished granite? Hospitals and sanitariums are springing up like mushrooms. Much better to cut down the premiums than have all this unnecessary luxury."

Insurance seemed to us to take a heavy toll of our income, and to help create a bureaucratic regime, but it gave a sense of security to all. Though everyone complained of it as a financial burden, no one ever found fault with its efficiency. Even on Sundays and holidays a doctor could be at the house within ten minutes of dialing the operator. The poor man who dropped in the snow knew he would wake in the ward

of a clean comfortable hospital, and because of this knowledge, poverty in the cities was a less desperate hardship. Socialized medicine is a program for the future in the United States. I saw it work efficiently in Poland.

CHAPTER 6

WINTER in Warsaw seems endless. Being as far north as Labrador, the days are short and the nights are long. Waves of chill damp fog roll in from the north and hang over the whole land during November and December. Sometimes for six weeks the sun does not shine. The bleak cold burrows itself into your soul. You forget that the sun can shine in a blue sky. But Christmas is usually clear, and by New Year's the dry winds from Russia have gathered enough force to blow the fogs back to Germany — where they remain until spring. In January, the real winter begins in Poland. Snow falls at night and the temperature drops, but by day the sun comes out in a dazzling blue sky. It shines so brilliantly that often by the end of February there is a false hope of spring. From under the deep hot bed of evergreen branches, daffodils force up their long bleached leaves. When it begins to become warm, in March, back roll the fogs from the German lowlands and Warsaw once more is buried under a dank and heavy cloud. By April, however, spring is in the air, though the ground may be blanketed under the heaviest snow of the winter.

In those days the arrival of the first robin was the signal for spring housecleaning. Windows that all winter had been pasted together with strips of cotton wool to keep out the cold winds were thrown open. On the first fine day they were filled with great red pillows and red feather counterpanes, put out to air in the sun.

With the first signs of spring came letters from the country. "When are you coming? The few miles from the

highway are passable now. On the road through the forest the sand is quite dry."

"Dabice, Charbice, Wlasy, you must see them all," John said. "The house where Father was born — Uncle John (he's the oldest brother) owns it, but it is really home for all of us. Charbice is right on the highway. You can reach it even in the worst part of winter. It is beyond Lodz, the textile center. A trolley runs within five miles of the house. Such wonderful communication!"

We packed our bags and took the train to Łódź. In those days only the diplomats and a few Cabinet Ministers or very rich merchants had automobiles. The trains were always packed to capacity. In our compartment all eight places were taken, two people, in most cases, to every single seat. The men seemed not to mind standing in the corridor, where they smoked and discussed the crops. Roaming the length of the train, they always found some acquaintance with whom to chat. In one of the third class carriages John found Prince Henry with whom he had gone to the same college in England. He was sitting between two peasants on the hard wooden bench, and eating from a package of sandwiches.

"You see," he grumbled, "Mother's economies run to third class carriages and sandwiches. Of course she is right. There is so much to rebuild in the country."

"Have you lost many acres in the Land Reform?" John asked him

"In our part of the country there is more land on the market than peasants to buy it." He told of the losses of others in his family who had been less lucky than they.

Changing the subject, John inquired. "What were you doing in Warsaw?"

He told John that he was entering the Foreign Office, at forty dollars a month.

As we pulled into Łódź we counted the chimneys that were smoking. Łódź was the center of the spinning industry. Most of the woollen cloth was made there, and cheap trousers were exported even to the East Side of London. On every street were factories, surrounded by the miserable homes of

the workers. In a city of a half million persons, Jews numbered more than half the population. We went by taxi over the rough cobblestone pavement to the trolley that ran from Łódź out into the country.

The trolley followed down a river valley passing through villages attached to dye plants and small factories. These villages were peopled wholly by Jews. At each station, boys dressed in cassocks and *paiss* peered in through the windows at us. The six inch greased black ritual curls formed a mournful frame to their sallow faces and oozing red eyes. There was not a tree nor blade of grass about the barrack-like brown wooden houses, not a flower nor curtain in the broken-down windows, yet everywhere slatternly women in periwigs were lazying over the sills. On the streets, men were loitering with shopkeepers on their rotting doorsteps. Beside and behind the houses the hard-packed earth was barren. Gusts of wind carried the dust in clouds over the crude cobblestone streets. Not a house nor fence had been repaired or repainted.

"Why do they live that way?" I asked, pulling back from the trolley windows as though the boys could touch me. "Is there nothing that can be done?"

"It is not because they are poor," John replied. "The peasants are poorer."

"Perhaps the rent —. The landlords should do something."

"Jews own this property; all these little factories are owned by Jews."

"How can they let their property deteriorate so horribly?" I cried. "It's not good business. Besides these people live in the country. Why don't they plant gardens like the neighboring peasants?"

"These are orthodox Jewish towns, ruled by the Rabbis who administer ancient Jewish laws and teach their ritual schools. The Jews live as in a state within a state and since their kingdom is not of this world, why should they care for gardens?"

Later I learned of the deep-rooted fundamental differences

between the Reformed and the orthodox Jews from my doctor, himself a Jew. The orthodox Polish Jews lived in their mystic cabalistic past, every activity prescribed by ritual laws of the Talmud. To my doctor, their mystic exaltation over suffering was irrational and foreign. He represented more than half the Polish Jews, modern, highly educated men and women eager to be part of the new state in which they already played important political and intellectual roles.

At last the trolley plunged through a pine wood, down a little slope, and came to a stop. This was the end of the line. The wood was like a wall, closing off those terrible dirty towns from the open country.

Across the meadow on a little bluff was a Gothic church, the walls of which had been replastered over in the eighteenth century. But in spite of the baroque trimmings, its great steep roof and narrow windows betrayed its Gothic past. Nestled about the church in a haze of apple trees was a little village whose outline fitted the landscape like a soft round hummock. Though the trees were bare and the road was muddy, geraniums bloomed in the windows, and grass grew thickly before the doors. Over all the sweet scent of peat smoke mingled with the clear air of the pine forest.

In honor of this first visit, Uncle John had sent the coach and four. It had been bought for John's grandmother before the Insurrection of 1863, before his grandfather had been exiled to Siberia and the house burned down. Today, only the kitchen wing remained standing, and it was there that John's grandmother brought up her four boys and her orphaned nephew, who later became Bishop of Lowicz and Warsaw. My father-in-law had been born with Russian soldiers standing in the room. His father, in chains, had been permitted to witness the birth. He was then dragged away to deepest Russia and returned only after twenty long years of exile. The mother had brought up the boys and had farmed her land so successfully that she had been hired to run the farm of a neighbor, who was also in chains in Siberia.

The horses pulled slowly up the long hill — up out of the lush river valley with its fertile hay meadows, divided by

deep drainage ditches. The evening wind blew the waving white beech fronds on either side of the road. We passed the shrine of Charbice which I had seen photographed in Cracow. The shrine and the white birch alley photographed against the sandy white road made a rich tracery against the plain Polish grain fields.

We knew we had come to Uncle John's land by the thick winter wheat which covered his fields like a bright green mat. Not a weed grew anywhere. All his fields were drained with terra cotta pipes, and as a result of this system his crops afforded double the yield of his neighbors'.

When the road turned, the horses broke into a canter. We swerved off the highway and galloped down the steep lane that led to Uncle John's house. The wooden gate was open under the lindens. To the right were the old brown barns, to the left the small village of whitewashed log cabins, their great thatched roofs thick with lichen. After the high road, the sand of the turn-around was soft. The one-story house (the wing of the old house burned in the Insurrection) was hidden by old thuja, arbor vitae, and the Japanese quince was just coming into bloom. On the end towards the river was a rustic porch covered with wistaria. A carriage step made of concrete before the front door was the only addition Uncle John had made.

Because of his great good sense and knowledge of practical economics, Uncle John had been called on to serve on the boards of directors of several industrial concerns in nearby Lodz. He had also been chosen President of the Provincial Farmers' Association because he was considered the best farmer of his province. He reinvested all farm profits above five percent back in the land. With them he had bought fertilizers, laid on tile drains and built a hydraulic electric plant to sprinkle his fields. He utilized the water of the river, which, because of nearby dye plants, was full of chemicals highly useful to the soil. He had electrified the village and his barns, to reduce the cost of insurance, but his house, which as he said, "brought no return on the investment anyway," was neither insured nor lighted by electricity.

It was five o'clock when we arrived, and the family were at tea about the dining room table. Uncle John came into the entrance hall to meet us and show us to our room behind the drawing room. There was hot water in the pitcher and in the basin on the wash stand. While I washed, John hung up our coats and unlocked the bags so the maid could unpack them. He called me to the window to see the broad drained meadows, Uncle John's pride, and the wind blowing in great gusts, flinging itself against the giant plane trees surrounding the house.

Before many minutes, Uncle John reappeared with one of his grandchildren. "That's enough prinking," he said. "They are impatient to see you." Following him into the dining room, I was introduced to my new relatives and to several of the nearer neighbors who had driven over to meet us and were seated at one end of the long table.

The dining room was large. At one end there was Aunt Stefcia's desk, the chaise longue, her Bechstein concert grand piano, and many old-fashioned comfortable arm chairs. At the other, a table for twelve or fourteen was set up, in case unexpected guests should arrive. On a white cloth, tea was laid — coffee with clotted cream, piles of brown bread and butter, pots of many kinds of preserves and honey, and a large babka cake. Once introduced, without further ceremony we had to help ourselves. There was a roar of conversation, which it was taken for granted I understood. The guests shouted at each other with free-for-all familiarity. The son-in-law, who spoke Polish with a French lisp, turned to me and asked, "We were wondering what price the farmer gets for milk in America?"

"About four cents a quart," I told him.

"That is worse than here. We didn't get anything for our hay last year. What was the price in the United States?"

As I was not well up on agricultural prices, this conversation soon languished.

In the hall, a bridge table always stood ready. We drank down our tea, for "they" were anxious to begin playing. John refused; he preferred to talk with his cousin, Marysia, but he

urged me into the game. We played five-handed, and I drew for the first four rubbers. It was nearly eight when, at last, I was free. Outside the windows was black night, not a light anywhere to be seen. The only sound was the shrill throbbing of the frogs from over the meadow.

All the women were dressed in black woollens. "Do we change?" I whispered to John.

"I doubt it." It was as he said. As soon as the last rubber was ended, dinner was announced.

Uncle John took me in and set me by him; the others all found their own places. The meal was served by two full-skirted maids with white gloves. It began with fermented bread soup. Uncle John always had it, he explained, every day in the year. "Don't take it unless you like it. There is always bouillon in the kitchen."

A roast boar was served next, the last of the season. A neighbor had shot it, and they had kept it to honor our coming.

The dinner ended with a platter of meringues and whipped cream, dotted with black preserved cherries and little drops of red syrup.

Aunt Stefcia loved coffee. Several persons told me how the last time she was in Italy she had bought an "Expresso" machine, which was now brought in and put on the table. We all watched in silence while she prepared it. Then some began talking about crops, others about our bridge game. Later, after Marysia put the children to bed, we would play with two tables. Uncle John was restless, he had everything ready. "Bring the coffee cups here, it's time to begin."

He bid on everything, even four clubs to the jack, and won. He seemed to know by instinct where every card lay.

By midnight my head was hot, and my feet like ice. "A cup of tea is what you need," everyone said. But John came to the rescue. "No, she is tired. It's bed she needs." When we left the room, the neighbors were still playing bridge. Having come to tea, they stayed on until after one.

Our room was dark and cold. The fire was out in the great white tiled stove, and the lamp had been turned down.

The beds had covers of forest green felt, with the family crest appliqued in the centers in still darker green. The wash stands and wardrobes were hidden by a screen. On a round table, covered with a dark fringed felt was an old-fashioned globe lamp. In the gloomy circle of its light stood a rose-wood Victorian sofa and arm chairs.

The shutters, drawn for the night, had been bolted from within with a heavy iron bar and then padlocked. On the door to the drawing room, which was lined with sheet iron, a similar bar was affixed. This had been put on during the war, when German marauders were abroad, after one had broken into the house. The night watchman had been killed, and Uncle John's nephew, who had run out of this very same room to find out the cause of the disturbance, had been shot through the leg.

In the airless room it was hard to sleep. Outside was the sound of the roaring wind, the shrill whistle of the watchman and the scratch of the dogs on the hard earth. I longed to turn on a light and read, but the candle on my bed table hardly pierced the gloom.

In the early morning we flung open the shutters and let in the spicy clear sunlight. Sunday silence and peace flooded about us. Only then did I fall asleep and I slept deeply for two hours. When we were dressed, we found a breakfast set out on the dining room table, sliced meats, goat cheese, brown and white bread baked in the village oven, and a sweet bread that was only served on Sundays. On the sideboard a kettle of water was boiling for tea. Sun flooded through the windows, reflecting the dazzling young green lawn which curled like a soft mat, clean and neat, against the house. One of the maids came to ask if we took eggs for breakfast. "The Enlightened Master breakfasted an hour ago," she told us. "But the ladies have not yet rung for their hot water. The horses are ordered for a little before ten. Church at Lutomiersk is at ten-thirty."

Having finished our breakfast, we took our hats and coats and went to wait for the horses before the house. But old Matthias, the groom, was already there with the coach. Un-

cle John was coming across the garden from his morning tour of inspection. "Wait for me," he called. "I will drive over to church with you." Without going into the house, he climbed into the carriage. "Stefcia had a bad night again, and may not be going. Marysia and the children will follow in the *bryczka*."

He whipped up the horses, and they galloped through the wooden gate, up the lane of lime trees, and on to the high road bordered with birches. Then down the high road they went at a brisk trot.

We retraced the road we had taken the previous day to the village, across the meadow to where the Gothic church stood, embedded in lilacs. When we arrived, Uncle John left the horses with the groom and disappeared in the crowd of peasants loitering before the door. We went in alone and sat down. Every place was taken by the peasant women who, crowded about us, had come well beforehand, while the men stood in the churchyard, hat in hand.

After the service, we visited the family vault to see where the grandparents had been laid. Uncle John showed the place he had arranged for his wife and the next generation. He waited each Sunday, he said, to let the peasants get a head start away from the church. But Marysia was so anxious about Aunt Stefcia that, undaunted by the crowd, she joined in the galloping procession. The peasants on Sunday were so exhilarated by the joy of the holiday that they galloped their horses all over the road. The men stood up, gaily waving their whips, each jockeying for the first place. Away they tore down the road, women screaming and giggling in the straw of the wagon. They raced like children, in a whirl of merriment.

After some time Uncle John looked at his watch. "If we go now, there will be time to drive over the meadow before dinner." You could see this was part of the schedule. On the way home he constantly compared his two watches without comment, counting the minutes at each mile post. Before the door of the house the children were sitting in the *bryczka* (which looks like a buck board). "Can we drive the

horses in the meadows, Grandfather?" they shouted gaily.

Uncle John held the horses while we all climbed into the *bryczka* and drove through the garden, the children jumping down to open and close all the gates. We crossed over the narrow plank bridge to the dykes along the meadows. The children knew their way about the checkerboard of ditches. As they guided the horses, Uncle John showed us his new sluice gates, and pointed out the different kinds of grasses that made up the hay. "In a good season there are five crops," he said. "The Army took it all last year. They cut it, and hauled it green to Łódź." When he told us how many tons he had to the acre, I was unable to tell him how many we grew in America.

"Those are the storks that are nesting in the village," said one of the little girls. "Look, there is one flying back." She was jumping up and down for joy. "Now it's really spring," she kept repeating.

The wind was cold. Though lightly clad, none of them seemed to notice it, neither the little girls in their red velvet dresses and sweaters, nor Marysia in her "tailor made" Angielski of dark worsted, nor Uncle John, so absorbed in the grass of his meadow. But I was glad when we reached the lea of the plane trees, by the village mill where Uncle John had put up his hydraulic electric plant. The miller was an "American." He had been born in the village, but his parents had migrated to the United States when he was a baby. When he had returned, in the late twenties, he had installed the most modern of flour mills in the old wooden building.

By the dam the river spread wide and quiet. Weeping willows protected the cropped grassy banks. On the commons children were playing, geese hissed at the horses as we drove over the grass up to the village set back from the river — one long street of houses, some ten along a dirt roadway. Unlike the German or Jewish villages that line the four sides of a square, Polish villages, even inside Germany, always string along the roadway. Sometimes they are several miles long — houses on one side and barns

on the other, with long narrow strips of ribbon-like fields leading over the hills behind them. On the outskirts were newer houses of brick, with red tile roofs, the older ones low and one-storied under the gigantic old plane trees, thatched and whitewashed blue or white. Every Polish village had a steam bath house, an ice house and a bread oven. On Saturdays the fire would be lit in the oven and all the women would bring their bread to bake in it. At Charbice, the village road ran along the family garden, the kitchen garden and the outhouses.

As we passed the kitchen, Uncle John asked if we had spoken to the cook. There would hardly be time to see the grain fields before dinner. Before the kitchen door, chickens had scratched away the grass, and were roosting in the currant bushes. The kitchen, the pantry, the larder and store room formed a long low wing, connected to the dining room. In the kitchen, at an immense stove in the center, stood the cook, dressed in white. Two kitchen girls were scrubbing vegetables. Skirts tucked up under their aprons, they bent over pails on the floor. There was no running water, a wash tub stood on a three-legged stool. The cook wiped his mouth on his sleeve before kissing our hands, saying, "Let Jesus Christ be praised, highly respected Mr. John and the new wife!"

"How are you, Tomaszek?"

"Getting old, highly respected Mr. John. I'm sixty-eight this autumn, and the rheumatism this winter has crippled me badly." He pulled his long mustachio. The brown hair under his tall white cap was hardly grey.

"That was a fine boar we had last evening."

"I won't be cooking much longer. I said to my wife only yesterday, 'It won't be long now before Tomaszek will be lying down in the village beside the old Master and Madame.'"

John answered, "Let Tomaszek not be so gloomy."

In the drawing room, Aunt Stefcia was waiting for dinner. She was sitting and smoking in the sunlight, a peaceful enigmatic smile on her puffy Buddha-like cheeks. "Has Tomaszek

been telling you his premonitions?" she asked. "We haven't been able to cheer him up all winter. The cold has hung on long this spring. I haven't left the house myself since I did Christmas shopping in early December."

"There was a stork in the meadow this morning."

"Yes, spring will be soon now," she replied. "If you were not too cold on the ride this morning they thought to drive over to Ruddy."

John asked, "Do the Werners still live there?"

Aunt Stefcia pulled at her home made cigarette before replying. "The two daughters are alone now. Their brother is continually in Dabrowa. They have rented to Piotrkowski — not badly. They say for one renting he gives fertilizer sufficiently."

After dinner everyone slept, at four tea was served and we set off in the *bryczka*, following the lane up across the highway, past Uncle John's fields and woods and on to Ruddy, some four or five miles further down the river.

The houses we passed on the high road were the usual one-storied white plastered dwellings, covered with vines and wistaria. Many had the four stubby pillars at the front door and the five or six rooms about the entrance hall. Most of these farms were of four hundred or five hundred acres. Holdings of this size comprised the bulk of the cultivated land in Poland, and the "gentry" who owned them were the backbone of the country, the ones who could be depended on to outwit the invader. Usually the owner was a man of University training, eager to try out new agricultural methods. In addition to farming he would mill flour or run a distillery, raise horses for the army or operate a beet sugar refinery. Though he was the social equal of the greatest aristocrat, to American eyes he appeared to live hardly better than the peasants.

The house at Ruddy was an ugly Nineteenth-Century building that meant to be Norman. But there was a Moorish look to the windows and a Gothic tower towards the river. On the south was a Renaissance loggia of artificial marble which dwarfed the house. The rooms were somber. The ceilings were cracked and grey, the wallpaper stained and peeling.

It had been looted by the Germans during the last war, and the two ladies had no money with which now to put it in order.

They greeted us cheerfully, and begged us to stay for dinner and spend the evening with them. They appeared quite disconsolate when, after refusing tea, we insisted on pushing on. Before going, we must see the garden. The wind was roaring in the plane trees as we wandered through the paths, under trees so tall and thick that nothing but ferns could grow under them.

When we returned home, Aunt Stefcia was still sitting in her chair in the drawing room. The lamp was lit on the table; the old blue velvet upholstery glowed in the lamp-light. "The Director of the Agricultural Station drove over for dinner, and the village priest will be here shortly." As she smoked, nodding her head pleasantly, she told us how the village priest, a man nearing sixty, had an orphanage of boys at the village. It was a marvel how he found means to feed and clothe them from the pennies he raised at the Masses. There were seventeen or eighteen boys there at the rectory. They raised their own potatoes and cabbages. Charbice sent them sausage at Christmas and Easter; the village women gave them bread at each baking.

The priest arrived while we were talking about him. He was a small round man with scarlet cheeks and bright child-like eyes. He did not look like the hero who had sheltered the village in the crypt during the bombardment, turned the priory into a refuge for the homeless, and himself nursed the wounded. During all the years of the German occupation he had cheered and counseled his parish. He had never known comfort and plenty, but had shared all the vicissitudes of the seasons with the impoverished folk of the region.

"Don't get up — please don't stand," he said, fearing to be an intruder. He sat on the edge of his chair and smoothed out the skirt of his cassock, which covered his coarse heavy leather boots, he took no notice of the kitten who played with the silk fringe of his sash, but began at once to talk of the weather, the growth of wheat, and the hay fields.

"Mr. Markowski from the Agricultural Institute," Uncle John introduced a stocky middle-aged man in riding trousers and a heavy whipcord jacket.

The village priest asked, "The great agricultural expert? Are you here for the night? No? At Lutomiersk? Then you can't pass us by in the morning. A few words to my boys, I beg you."

Wodka was brought in and *kanapki*. "What fine pickled mushrooms, Madame," remarked the priest. "You do them at home? And smoked carp too! What a feast this is! And the ham — the very best in the country — from what wood do you smoke it?"

Dinner was served. During the bread soup, Uncle John poured out claret. "Is that the wine that was sunk during the invasion?"

"Tell me about it," I begged.

"After the battle of Lutomiersk the Germans were billeted in our village. The Commandant took over our house. I feared he would drink up my wine, so we sank it all behind the dam. I hoped the stream would carry off the labels. The Szetkowskis put theirs in the carp pond. A few days later, every label came to the surface, and of course the Germans had the pond drained."

"How did you save your doorknobs?" someone asked.

"I had the village smith make a set with iron before the order came out. I had heard they always took brass. These we greased and buried in the furrows of the vegetable garden. They never even suspected. When searchers came for the brass knobs, they found only iron latches."

"The way to get on with the Germans," the priest remarked, "is to foresee their plans. Don't try to cross them. Never show fear or servility."

Someone sighed, "I hope I never live to see them here again."

Another, "But if they do come, this time they will regret it."

"*Panie! Panie!* The Poles are too courageous," said the priest. "I fear they don't count the cost."

Uncle John who always disliked histrionics, changed the subject. "What do you think of the season, Mr. Agriculturist? Was there enough snowfall this winter?"

"In some parts the frosts came before the snow."

"My nephew writes his rye suffered severely."

Uncle John nodded in confirmation of the expert. When the ducks were served, he said, "Take the whole one, Mr. Priest. You know the adage: 'a duck is a foolish bird, too big for one, too small for two.'"

"Oh, no, Mr. Landowner. I couldn't eat it. I only take potatoes and sour milk in the evening."

"But make an exception," Uncle John urged.

"It would be a kindness if the lady permitted my taking it to my older school boys. They are growing lads, you know."

"There are surely plenty in the kitchen. I'll have two put in a basket, take one now."

But the priest persistently refused. "Only the dessert will I gladly accept," he said, smiling.

The next morning we left the house early in order to visit the boys before they left the priory to go to the village school. The walls of the old Renaissance building were six feet thick, making the rooms hard to heat. The younger boys therefore slept together downstairs, and the older boys had a large room above. One end of the room was filled with crude cots, the other was arranged as a study, with tables, chairs and book-cases. On every window ledge, pots of geraniums, wandering Jew and straggly ferns gave a homey atmosphere to the otherwise bare room. The white tile stoves were lighted in the afternoons. Heat was not wasted in the mornings, when the boys were away at school. In the unheated washroom were a row of wash basins, with a spigot of cold water. The priest proudly showed us the pigeonholes where each boy kept a glass, a toothbrush and towel.

The priest served hot milk and coffee for us in his bedroom. His bed, covered in a dark felt, was piled high with pillows and an eiderdown. A melodeon stood by the window, and a motley collection of plush arm chairs surrounded a black walnut table, on which was a Turkish carpet. Between holy

pictures, the walls were encrusted with photographs of boys of all ages, boys he had brought up in his orphanage without a penny's subsidy from the State, with only the support of his parishioners. They left him when old enough to go to work, but all through their lives they returned to him as to a father. Such orphanages in every hamlet of Poland were considered part of the normal work of the country clergy.

During the years Poland was free, the peasants sent their sons to the University. They became doctors and lawyers and even had positions in the Foreign Office. More than thirty thousand graduated annually. They made up the new city middle class. This social revolution, accomplished without bloodshed, changed the complexion of Poland. The State provided new forms of employment in its factories, refineries, and on the roads which it was constructing. State hospitals and sanitariums called on young physicians, and young lawyers were needed for free State Legal Council. Though British and American "Leftists" on their travels rarely stopped for more than a night on their trip to Russia, foreign capitalists doing business with Poland regarded her as the incarnation of State Socialism.

CHAPTER 7

*I*N 1930 my husband was sent to Geneva to work in the Economic Section of the League of Nations. We returned in 1932 having seen the failure of the Disarmament Conference of 1931, and only too aware of the obstacles in the path of a Federation of the smaller eastern nations. Unfortunately the idealists at the League of Nations were as opposed to regional groups as were Germany and Russia. The English and French diplomats tried to bolster the democratic regimes in Germany of Stresemann and Brüning as if in an unconscious appeasement for the Treaty of Versailles.

The eastern agricultural states found it impossible to form an agrarian bloc. John's desk was rifled and his carefully prepared sheets of statistics vanished. His corrected report disappeared the very morning it was to be mimeographed for a meeting held to consider various schemes for Danubian federation. He personally felt convinced it was the work of the French Second Bureau because the French were opposed to everything tending to break into their "little Entente." By preventing the formation of the Danubian Bloc the French played into the hand of Germany who, posing as financial protector of all the small eastern nations, soon held them in economic bondage. Lithuania, for example, was one of the first states made economically dependent upon Germany as far back as the regime of Stresemann. We came back to Warsaw bewildered and saddened that none of the democracies, or so it seemed in Geneva, were pursuing a clear, logical eastern European policy.

We expected the city to seem shabby after Geneva. In-

stead, the Aleje Jeruzolimskie was gay with pansy beds, new sidewalk cafes had been opened, and most of the houses had freshly cleaned façades. To our amazement the taxi glided smoothly over recently laid asphalt into the Place of the Three Crosses, where many brand new houses were being built, and where most of the old ones (by city ordinance, as we later discovered) were being re-stuccoed. Two years' improvements had changed the whole slow, dingy aspect of the city to one of gaiety and motion. The smartly dressed people bore no resemblance to the barefoot, shapeless forms I had seen six years before. The pot holes in the streets, the cracked and fallen plaster on the houses, the dilapidated taxis, had vanished. Some houses were adding a story, on others the Victorian scrolls were being removed from the pediments over the windows, or the old iron balconies were being replaced with concrete. We felt like strangers as we looked out the windows of our cab at the unexpected improvements.

Newly planted trees which lined all the streets were just coming into bud. As part of the "beautifying Warsaw" program of Mayor Starzynski, the first hundred and fifty thousand had already been planted. When we turned into our own street we saw some school children watering their gift to the city of black thorn trees, which were just bursting into bloom. We had noticed other children with spades and shovels marching across the Place of the Three Crosses.

In 1930 we had bought an apartment in the center of the city. It was in a co-operative building which had been recently opened in the old palace garden of Frascati. We had just moved in when, a week later, we had been unexpectedly ordered off to Geneva. During this two years' absence we had rented our apartment to a foreign diplomat. Before returning we had written Makowska to put it in order and now we felt all the satisfaction of coming home. When in 1930 we had joined the co-operative, the building problem had been acute. Then no one had enough money to finance a whole apartment house, even though the State granted fifteen years freedom from taxation as an inducement. All over Warsaw, co-operatives had been organized as limited stock

companies. We all belonged to the Board of Directors and, without expert advice, it had taken two years to organize and build the house. Though we had had many offers to sell the apartment while we were away, the housing shortage was then still far too acute for us to consider giving up an apartment.

However, during the spring after our return, this situation was changing very swiftly. Not counting renovations of old buildings, new buildings put up during this time housed half a million people. The majority of these were workmen's co-operatives, which went up on the periphery of the city. They were built in vast units, some housing as many as ten thousand persons in a single project. On the first free Sunday after our arrival Michael took us to see the "Workers' Victory," the largest in the suburb of Zoliborz. It was as completely organized as a small town, with laundry, schools, nursery and supply shops. It even had its own bus service to the center of Warsaw.

Like many smaller projects, this great co-operative had been organized as the philanthropic housing society of volunteer architects and engineers when Michael was executive secretary. He aimed to make housing a public concern, rather than leave it to the mercy of speculative builders. Through the efforts of this society, the Prime Minister started a commission and brought Michael into his office to supervise all new plans. Zoning laws were so strict that not only architectural style of the houses, but the precise height of the buildings was kept uniform. No house could shut off the sunlight from its neighbor. Although other suburbs had houses more prettily planted, where many of the professors and Government officials of our acquaintance lived, we never tired of walking through Zoliborz. Here three hundred thousand workers had been housed.

These immense projects were financed by private and state insurance companies, savings banks and public utilities, which were required by law to invest a large percentage of their holdings in low-cost public housing at a profit of only 1½% to 2%. These were the newest steel and glass brick buildings

set at appropriate angles to let in sun and break up the monotony. They were surrounded with gardens and tennis courts. They had free schools, day nurseries and playgrounds, and they had been planned to house a family at ten dollars a month. It was said, "Such buildings should be so well constructed they can be amortized during fifty years without costs of major repairs"

John and I both found great pleasure in the general spaciousness and modern architecture of the new sections of Warsaw. Of a fine afternoon we strolled along one or another of the stately thoroughfares where the new hospitals and technical schools were being built — the Curie Cancer Institute, the Warsaw Polytechnic, the Agricultural Institute and the School of Aviation. Now all these fine institutions have been destroyed by the Germans and their laboratories stolen. Then they were planted with fine trees, neat lawns, clipped hedges, rose beds and hybrid lilacs. On every side street were low houses, tennis courts and gardens, built by co-operative unions of artists, professional groups, teachers and civil servants.

After 1934, because of the imminence of war, all the houses by ordinance had to be in a modernistic style with flat concrete roofs, to reduce the danger from incendiary bombs. This futuristic style of architecture and gardens attracted many of our friends, who, caught by the building fever moved to Saska Kempa, where over ten thousand houses went up after 1932. This suburb was not bombed by the Germans during their invasion of Poland in 1939, and it is that section that they have chosen as living quarters for their administrative officers.

At this time everyone was interested in building. Wherever you went people asked, "Who is your architect?"

"Is he one of the modernists?"

"Poland has such a beautiful classical style, why won't the architects follow it?"

"Where is everyone nowadays? You see no one about any more." Everyone was building, no one had time to sit about at parties.

Two months after our return from Geneva, we too caught the building fever. Once more it became apparent that we would soon need a nursery. Those afternoons when John finished work a little early, we hunted plots and compared various plans. The only friends that interested us were those whose houses were already completed, and those who could advise us on the choice of builders and architects.

One beautiful spring morning while I was practicing finger exercises on the piano, a gentleman called. The maid showed him into the study. He bowed stiffly as I came into the room and said, "I am Mr. Kurnatowski, from Posnań. I have heard you are thinking of building. I want to sell the land I inherited in the Frascati gardens. I will sell it at a sacrifice price of \$6,000 as I need the cash immediately."

I knew, for we had previously inquired, this was half the price of other land in the garden.

"When must you have the money?" I asked. "We could hardly give it to you this afternoon."

"If you decide to take it, your husband's signature is as good as cash," he replied. "If I don't sell the land I shall take the 10 o'clock train to Posnań tonight, to see if I can sell something there."

"Come back at four for your answer," I said, showing the man to the door, and ran to the telephone to call John.

"First call up mother and see what she thinks," he advised, "and then make up your mind whether you like the plot." He promised to be home before four.

I telephoned Cracow. My mother-in-law's answer, as to all our questions, was, "You must decide. I'm in no position to judge. If you like the land, buy it, and we will help you as much as we can."

The Frascati Garden was in the very center of town. The Houses of Sejm (Parliament) stood on one side of it. The apartment building in which we lived, was built at the entrance gates. The old park had been planted in the eighteenth century about a small, one-storied "palace." Now the heirs had divided it on paper and were feverishly trying to sell their plots though neither roads nor sewers had been

laid and the garden was still a thicket of ancient trees and muddy paths.

I went down into the garden. The old gnarled apple trees which surrounded our apartment building were lacy white against the vivid blue of the sky. You could see the plot proposed for sale from our windows. John had even sketched the great white birch, with its fronds sweeping the ground. Now it was feathery with new green buds. Beside it were an ancient catalpa tree and two pines. The whole plot was overgrown with a thicket of privet and lilac bushes

I sat down on the ground under the birch tree, and looked up to the sky through its swaying branches. I felt the land was already mine. How sweet to own a little plot of earth, and when my child came to cradle him in a house strong enough to withstand the ravages of time! "The entrance," I thought, "will be between these two old pine trees, and the birch will stand by his window, so that he sees the sky for the first time through these branches." A cold March wind made the branches sway like a pendulum, but the sun was hot against the earth. A little beyond where I sat, a gardener had opened his cold frames, and pulled the straw pads across the glass roof of the greenhouse. He was sifting his compost piles and preparing his hot frames. Yet this was the very center of Warsaw. I tried to imagine this relic of a garden covered with new houses. The French Embassy, it was rumored, would build over there where the glass house stood.

I could hardly wait for John to return, and began to pace up and down. Inside again, I found it impossible to read or concentrate on the piano. I made a little sketch of the house I thought would fit the lot. In my mind's eye I pictured the outside with a timeless plainness, the inside spacious, yet compact enough to fit the changing circumstances of the present times. I called Makowska from the kitchen. "What would you think if we bought land in Frascati and built?"

"I think if Madame builds we will surely have servant quarters second to none in Europe," she said with great conviction. "My mind cannot imagine how fine it will be," and she clapped her hands with joy. "You will build us a little

apartment in the basement, and my husband and I will care for the house forever." Her imagination rushed on. "We will give notice this evening in the old palace."

"But Makowska," I pleaded in vain, "the land is not bought, and you should know how long it takes to build anything." She was oblivious to anything but the joyous prospect of the new quarters. Our house was hers from the day it was projected.

When at last John arrived, the decision had been taken. For me, the land was bought. It was expensive, but it was in the center of the city. It was not as though we were faced with years of walking great distances to bus lines, or waiting for the city to reach us.

When the gentleman returned, John pointed out what I had already told him, that it might be a week before we could assemble the necessary cash. But the gentleman insisted our I.O.U. was sufficient. We had only to sign a small paper. The land was ours.

We were so excited we could hardly sleep all night. We telephoned all our relatives and friends — everyone must know of our new venture. "Who is the architect?" they all asked, and each had some suggestion to make.

"My brother-in-law will build," I had said. But Michael, when asked, replied, "I will help you, but I could never build it for you. Ask Professor Niemojewski of the University. He has worked in Paris and is very artistic. His books are to be found in libraries everywhere even in the Metropolitan Museum of New York." So it was settled.

As soon as the land was registered in the Great Land Book of Warsaw under our joint names, we went to the Building Commission to find out what restrictions were placed on it, and receive permission to build. We found it was true that the French had bought the the adjacent lot for their Embassy. "The style of all adjacent houses must be French," we were told. The French had made that condition. The house could only cover one-third of the land, and no garage, greenhouse or porch could encroach on the two-thirds of garden space.

The outline of our house, then, was established by statute. It was as much fun as a puzzle putting the rooms together, to get the most sunlight and greatest number of feet of floor space. Various contractors offered to build it, but our architect preferred to do what he called "your own building." He himself hired the foreman, mason and carpenters. This proved to be no economy, for when anything went wrong, we were to blame. I had to oversee the whole work on the building. Blueprint in hand, no matter what the weather, I watched it all go up from foundation to finish. I knew every workman by name—which ones could be trusted, and which ones shirked and complained. Most of the men worked along steadily without being watched but a few needed prompting, and were always complaining, "I've a drain but no connection at two points," or, "My window upstairs is a brick further from the floor than the one down."—"The floors don't agree"—"The bricks for the ceiling have the wrong profile"—"Two of the iron beams are different lengths"—"Which one is for the balcony outside the window?"—"The sashes came all wet from the carpenter's."—"Thirty meters of piping for the hot water, and not a single elbow!" etc., every day, week in and week out.

At first I used to telephone, but later I fetched the needed parts from the dealers myself, even bringing several toilet bowls and a length of pipe with a red flag tied on the end in an open *dorozka*.

When the roof was reached, a cross with a wreath was nailed to it, and the men came for a day's extra pay and a holiday. They expected us to break bread with them, and wished to drink to our health and prosperity.

The full days had gone by so swiftly that I had scarcely noticed that summer was coming to an end. Our house was of bomb-proof construction. The roof of reinforced aero-concrete was a yard thick, on top was a layer of waterproof cement. The whole surface was finally to be covered with three layers of asphalt. Before the waterproof cement was dry we had a cloudburst. Within a few hours the sewers could hold no more, and the streets were running with water.

Six inches of water stood on the roof of our house ; it poured into the rooms, running down the sides of the walls in wide streaks. The newly laid inner floors were wet. The workmen became alarmed and gloomy and muttered forebodings. "The house will have brick mold unless heat is turned on at once," they prophesied darkly.

It was a four-storied house, one floor for us, the others to be rented. There were fourteen bathrooms, four kitchens, an elaborate hot water heating system, two furnaces and centralized electric refrigerators. In every room we burned coals in open baskets to dry out the walls and ceilings sufficiently so that they could be plastered. The carpenter refused to put in the doors and windows. "They would swell up like a sponge in all the dampness." We were over a month behind with our work. The autumn rains, which came early that year, continued throughout the whole of September !

Late in October, after eight weeks of rain, the weather turned fine again. The beautiful Polish autumn came at last. Finally the house dried out sufficiently for the roof to be asphalted and the windows put in. The end was in sight, and we began to look about us after eight months of voluntary exile, to answer the mail that had piled up during the summer and the telephone calls that had come while I was out.

I had talked, thought and dreamed in Polish from the moment the house was started. I had called my father-in-law Tatus and my mother-in-law Mulka, and they had shown me all the solicitude and tenderness of my own mother and father. In the same year I gave birth to our Polish child. These two fundamental primitive activities recreated me. I had made a place for myself among Poles, who everywhere were as busy as I had been, building themselves solidly constructed homes, and unconcerned with everything beyond the present. I had learned to work with the Polish workman. We had had a hundred different men, specializing in various trades, many of whom we kept in touch with later. I knew when to depend on them and trust their judgment.

Had not our mason solved the problem of our stairway when our architect miscalculated the size of the hall? He had conceived of stairs spiraling up like a ribbon, without side support. It was the mason who carried it out, without even a drawing to go by. The mason also worked out the very complicated pitch of the flat roof, so that each drain should receive the same load of water

The men who laid the floor had come from the Pinsk Marshes. They did beautiful woodwork, matching the grain and color. They were paid by the piece, and four or five men laid all forty rooms in three days. It seemed as if they worked around the clock, for they were anxious to be paid and leave

The painter too worked in secret on Sundays and evenings. The sooner he finished our work, he said, the sooner he could begin another job. He was an artist, his eye was true, and even after four years his paint had neither cracked nor peeled. He could be trusted to mix with the best oils. In 1939, a month before the invasion, he repainted my iron railings, foreseeing that it might be years before they could be done over — if the house were left standing at all. He had discovered a new colored amalgam for metal which, when it hardened, formed part of the iron. There was no need of overseeing his work, done with the pride of a good artisan.

Our bathrooms were beautiful. Some of the workmen had told me where to buy odd colored tiles in small lots, hand-baked in grey, yellow, lobster red, blue or black. The men sorted them out, dividing them between each bathroom. When they had finished, each bathroom was different, but each seemed more beautiful than any of the others.

While we were building a hundred other apartments went up about us, each more modern than the last, wholly fire-proof two and three room apartments, low in rent, built for the new middle classes, Government employees, civil servants, young lawyers and doctors that peopled the new democracy. Most of the front doors were of wrought bronze, the

work of young sculptors. None of the houses were old-fashioned plastered brick, but were all of cut stone hauled up from Kielce. This tremendous building activity continued unabated to the very day of the outbreak of war.

CHAPTER 8

WHEN Andrew was born I had begged my physician to arrange the birth at home. He had consented, partly because my father-in-law was Dean of Medicine and because he knew how nervously I dreaded going to a hospital. Memories of the frightful six weeks that attended the loss of my first son and the second catastrophe in Switzerland where I had lost a little daughter made me fearful of the cruel formality of hospitals. I wanted this child delivered at home so that from the moment of its birth my mother-in-law could watch over its welfare. "The house will be turned into a hospital," I promised, "and everything shall be arranged as you desire it"

"I will make an exception only for you," the doctor had said, "for it is a great inconvenience. Only you must have one of my own specially trained nurses who has worked for me now over ten years. She will come beforehand and prepare everything"

When the nurse came she made a price of \$150 for the birth. She would take no other case ten days before the appointed time in order to be free at any time I needed her. I considered the price very high, but we learned it was the usual price paid a good obstetrical nurse who had graduated from the Medical College as well as the School of Nursing. My mother-in-law did not like her personality and wanted a nurse of our choosing to be responsible for the baby. After interviewing many candidates we decided to take a first cousin of our cook Makowska who had recently graduated with honors. She was to receive \$100 because though she would help at the birth, she would not be responsible for it.

These details were settled well beforehand, for the most highly recommended nurses were always engaged six months in advance. A week before the event the nurse in charge ordered the walls and floor of my room washed with lysol, and the pictures and chintz curtains taken down. Each week she would change the drum of sterilized linen she kept in my room, so that the necessary dressings were always on hand. A special bed was prepared and kept in readiness for the final day.

When the great moment arrived, I was put in a night shirt from the hospital, and the dog and cat were locked up in the servants' room. I could hear through the walls the little bitch scratching and moaning, but the cat somehow escaped. When the nurse opened the door for the doctor, it slipped into the room. With a flying leap he was on my pillow and had snuggled down by my ear, throbbing and purring. The head nurse screamed and flung him out, but it was too late now to change everything — the anesthetist had prepared the mask. Makowska's cousin kept calm, "The cat's a clean animal, he never leaves the apartment," she said soothingly. Her words went round my head in the jumble of gas — "The cat is a clean animal, he never leaves the apartment."

"Please do not send my husband and Mulka away," I begged. In the haze I could see them in white aprons with masks on. I pushed off the gas mask, "not so much ether — I'm not afraid," I said.

I could hear the doctor tell my husband, "This is the strangest birth I have witnessed since I was a student in Ciacow when Stryenska, the artist, was having her twins. She spent the whole time sketching. She would interrupt my work with, 'Don't move your head, doctor — you spoil the composition.' And when the first child was born we told her there would be twins. 'That's splendid' she said, 'now I can finish my picture.'"

When Andrew was born I heard his first cry. John was holding my hand. "It's a boy," he said excitedly. Then I fell asleep.

When I waked, it was afternoon. I could see across the hall into the dining room that had been changed into a nursery. The afternoon sun flooded the windows. The nurse was saying, "The little bitch sits under the bassinet and every stir makes her so nervous she runs for help. At dinner she brought her bone and left it for the baby."

Someone else said, "The Bishop is here, may he see the lady?" The nurse smoothed back my hair. John brought in two large white lilacs in pots, "One is from Tatus, the other from Mulka," he said arranging them on either side of the big window. They are for the new garden." The house boy brought in five dozen yellow roses, "Madame hasn't a vase large enough for them."

"There," said the nurse, "at home it's always the same, the servants must come in and ask stupid questions."

Tatus was bringing in the bishop. "The Bishop waited an hour for you to wake"

"Uncle Bishop, how kind," I said, and kissed the amethyst ring on his outstretched hand.

"He looks a fine baby. I will baptize him Saturday week. I came to do it today," he spoke with his usual halting humility, "but the Rector said there is no hurry. He will return when you can be up"

My eyes closed in spite of themselves. My father-in-law, quick to perceive my weariness, pushed the Bishop out of the room, motioning me to speak no more. Nothing made him more impatient than unnecessary formalities. He closed the door, shutting out the glorious sunlight, radiant on the bassinet of my son.

I was too weak to call him back, to beg him to leave the door open. Tears of weakness and exhaustion trickled down my nose onto the pillow. I felt too tired to move my head from the wet place they made

But soon John was back, peeping through the door to see if all was well. Many more flowers had come — he wanted to show me other baskets of white cyclamen and maiden hair too big for one to carry, the azalea bushes, some trimmed as cones and cylinders, others a yard across, bunches of pink,

white and red roses. They were countless. "Love to you" — "Joyful greetings" — "For the Son" — "Our friends" — how had they found out so quickly? Uncle shouldn't have done it. "From Stas, how beautiful." "How just like Tony." There was no longer a place to put anything. Seventy-odd bouquets and plants had been sent us. During the long afternoon, the bell rang constantly with flowers and telegrams, all the family in Warsaw came to offer congratulations. But the two nurses were decided I should see no one, no one should see the baby.

Without any preparation, John announced, "When Eva came, I gave her the cat."

"Blankus is gone!" I screamed.

"The nurse refused to stay in the house with him," was the answer. "She says that cat trails germs around everywhere. He might even jump into Andrew's bed."

From exhaustion once more tears came in my eyes.

"Try and be reasonable," John said. "When Andrew's bigger, we will get him back again." Poor Blankus — he had traveled to Geneva with us with a passport stamped at each frontier, he rode in the car like a dog — in all the changes of apartments his one anxiety had been to cling to us, he would even hide in our suitcases while we were packing. I could not be resigned to parting with the faithful creature.

Just then Andrew woke up and gave a heart-rending shriek. "Oh, go quickly. Whatever is the matter?" The nurse went so slowly.

"It's nothing at all — a fine healthy baby," she said indifferently.

"Call Mulka," I begged John, "the baby may die."

"Mulka's asleep now — don't be afraid when the baby cries loudly. It's only the low feeble cry that is a danger sign," he said and kissed my forehead.

"If he is awake, then surely I can see him. Do bring him here no matter what the nurse says."

A few moments later she brought the baby to me, protesting, "It will only excite the Madame. I always say the

first twenty-four hours the lady must rest. Think how many years you have to admire the baby!"

On the twelfth day I was allowed to be up for the christening ceremony. The doctor gave his permission on condition that I sat in an arm chair. My legs had been bandaged to prevent phlebitis. Afterwards I had to return to bed, for I was really not allowed to walk about for six weeks. The nurse insisted that these precautions would make all the difference to future health. She said, "If a woman gets out of childbed too soon, the muscles in her face will sag along with the muscles of her belly and everything else. The lady must be patient and prepare for her getting up with proper exercises in bed and massages." She bound me from arms to thigh with a rolled bandage. I would have to remain at least four weeks in this binding — which was to be removed only night and morning when she bathed and massaged me.

My father-in-law arrived by plane from Cracow for the ceremony. Since the regular planes were established in 1930, he had never traveled otherwise. My mother-in-law likewise would say, "Now there are planes, how can one travel in slow, dirty trains?" "Planes make it possible to come to Warsaw for a day or two without weariness, we will come to visit you more often now"

Tatus' present for the baptism was a Sixteenth Century Madonna covered with a skirt of old embossed silver. It was worked in a beautiful baroque pattern of Pomegranates unlike the stiff Romanesque style of the Orthodox ikons. He gave Andrew two bottles of a hundred-year-old Tokay wine — one from which to toast his health at the baptism, the other for his twenty-first birthday. A cousin brought a bottle of a hundred years mead, and the Bishop brought a little gold locket of the Virgin.

The whole family assembled in the living room which a Deacon had previously arranged like a chapel with an altar. John held the baby while the Bishop read the many prayers he had collected for the occasion. When he poured the holy water, Andrew screamed loudly. "A sure sign he will pro-

claim the faith with much fervor," the Bishop exclaimed smiling kindly. Following the ceremony, tea was served to the family and intimate friends who came during the whole afternoon to offer their congratulations. The Bishop gave the first toast which Tatus had to answer. Then healths of the grandparents, the god-parents, the parents and the child were drunk from the hundred-year-old amber Tokay.

Next morning I learned that Tatus would not return to Cracow but was to remain in Warsaw for a hearing at the Ministry of Education on a bill which, if it passed, would give the State the right of nominating professors. "This bill must be opposed at all costs," he explained. "The State should indeed provide for universities, but it should not have control over them in either subject matter or the choosing of teachers." Tatus spoke seriously and was obviously worried about the outcome. When he went out, John told me, "The Minister of Education is a hothead. He threatens Tatus with expulsion from the University. Representatives of various faculties will support Father, but if the proposition becomes law, their situation too can be serious."

When Tatus returned in the afternoon, he told us nothing of his conversations. Instead he played with his grandson and asked us what plans we had made for the summer. "I won't come in to see you in the morning," Tatus told us when he kissed us good night. "I must collect my thoughts. Before an important conference I do not care to speak to anyone. Arrange for Edward to bring up my breakfast at seven so that I need not be hurried."

At three he returned to fetch his bag, there was just time to reach the plane if John drove fast. I had to wait until John returned from the airport to learn the outcome of the hearing. "Short of getting a change of Ministers, there is no hope for us. Tatus believes his arguments made no impression."

The next morning the press was ablaze with "CRACOW PROFESSORS REVOLT — Fifty professors threaten to leave the University if their age-long privilege of selection of new members is taken over by the State."

Several of our more pusillanimous friends in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs came to the house to plead with us. Did we not realize the Professor risked prison by his attitude?

A hearing was called for by the Sejm, the two houses of Parliament. During the six weeks of anxious preparation for the hearing, we hardly saw Tatus. He had daily meetings not only with the staff in Cracow but also with professors from the other universities, Vilna, Lwow, Warsaw and Posnań — trying to weld them into a unity. Among them, some of course were friends of the Minister's, others were hesitant in resigning and had to be persuaded that it was a serious matter for the government to appoint professors to a university. Some felt that the State was as good a judge as another and anyway, would probably accept the universities' candidates. The various universities were slow to pass resolutions, but public opinion expressed through the greater part of the press was strongly for the complete independence of the professors. The *Cracow Times*, closed because of its outspoken editorials against the Government, opened two weeks later in Warsaw.

But the resolution to place all Professors on the payroll of the Ministry of Education — a measure that virtually destroyed the autonomy of the universities — was voted down when it reached the Sejm. The universities had won out and the Minister of Education, who had tried by this bill to find a lucrative place for his henchmen, was repudiated by Parliament and soon dropped from his post as Cabinet Minister.

One afternoon at tea time we heard a boy calling under our windows, "Extra! — Extra!" Listening attentively we heard him say, "Minister Pieracki murdered — Minister of Interior shot." Out in the streets groups of people collected about the boy selling papers, and as leaves blown in the wind the crowd eddied and swirled as groups broke off towards the city, not a mob running, but separated, scuttling figures in two's, and three's, all carried by the same impulse, to reach the place of the disaster without creating a commotion.

"Strange," said John, "I was at the club where this hap-

pened just before lunch. I passed the Minister coming in as I left to return home."

The bell rang, a friend came in. "Isn't it terrible?" she said. "He was shot in the very doorway while waiting for a taxi." Another bell, another friend — another and another.

The boy hurried away for fresh tea cups and bread and butter for the dozen or more persons who had dropped in to learn what interpretation John put on the assassination. Soon the telephone began ringing. "Do you know?" "You have heard?" John was unable to leave his study before the telephone bell would ring again. In the drawing room everyone was talking at once.

"The Ruthenians did it."

"No, the Ukrainians."

You could hear someone ask, "A plot?"

And someone confirm it, "Yes, it's part of an international plot."

"The Germans wish to overthrow Poland," it was suggested.

"No, they mean to weaken her internally," another flung out.

"Perhaps the Ukrainians wished to start a revolution so the Russians can invade us."

"Not the Russians — the Germans." The tone was authoritative.

"You are sure?" we repeated in chorus.

"Indeed, yes. Weapons made in Germany were found on the side street where the murderer threw them as he jumped over the fence and disappeared." That was proof.

"The police searched all the buildings in the neighborhood."

"Impossible a man could disappear from under their nose." I said, offering a second cup of tea which no one accepted. Everyone was more concerned with what had become of the criminal.

"He jumped the fence; only his revolver has been found."

"They believe the German Embassy arranged it," John reported.



John and I being received in Yugoslavia on the
Danubian mission



Professor and Mrs Kostanecki (*Tatuz and Mulka*)

"Von Rintelen is always out for trouble!"

"If one could only get something on the Embassy."

"Or at least have Von Rintelen recalled."

"I never go there."

"Nor I."

"Nor I."

"When they asked us for dinner last winter," I confessed, "we went because the head of the western division of the Foreign Office and two Cabinet Ministers had accepted."

"We will never accept another invitation because obviously we won't ask a German under our own roof," John paced before the windows from time to time, looking out on the street

"What will the outside world think of this latest 'outrage'?" That was what we all wanted to know.

"Oh, the British papers will say, 'New Internal Disorders,' " someone suggested

"The German papers will call for a re-examination of frontiers and minorities," the voice of a friend from the Foreign Office.

"Minorities — that's the worst of it. When you've seen how they were organized in Upper Silesia eight years ago, you can imagine what they are doing today!"

A lady close to British circles whispered to her neighbor, "The British Consul told me he knows for sure the Ruthenians are kept in rebellion by Germany, their discontent is the work of German provocation agents."

"I doubt he would say such a thing. It hardly seems possible."

"Indeed he did. He goes to that part of the country every year, and visits the Ukrainians too," she stoutly maintained. "He even speaks the Ukrainian language and reads their papers."

"Pilsudski should have made Poles of them," we all agreed. "Why did he grant them so much autonomy? Everyone knows the Germans supply them with arms."

"The Poles are the only people compelled to keep their Minority Treaty obligations under the League of Nations."

Imagine Germany or Italy allowing a League Commission to investigate minorities." We could hardly imagine such a condition. Yet in population Poland was second only to Italy. Because her strategic position was weaker, she was treated like a small nation.

"Little good adherence to treaty obligations will do Poland," someone said bitterly.

"If one country began breaking treaties," John admonished, "think where it would end. That would give the Germans and Hungarians the very chance they are looking for."

We were all aware of the danger. We saw no way out of it unless England and France put an end to these Minority questions. But with both countries at Geneva pursuing a policy of "hands off Central Europe" and America following an isolationist policy, Poland was forced to submit to German intrigue in the guise of carrying out Minority treaties. Text books and German teachers were provided even where there was only one child that claimed German extraction. This farce of allowing an autonomous German state to exist within Poland opened the frontier to thousands of German agents.

In despair we had discussed the whole question with Mr. Lipski, later Polish Ambassador to Berlin. Everywhere in Geneva there was a persistent refusal to face the logical consequences of Germany's underground work through her minorities, even when these Germans loudly proclaimed themselves the vanguard of Greater Germany.

"Poles are so unsuccessful with stating their positions," we agreed as we said good night, each one promising to telephone the instant we heard an authoritative report.

After the murderer of Pieracki escaped to Berlin he became the head of a Ukrainian organization that was a cover for German espionage in Poland. It was hard for anyone in Poland to understand such treachery. In the thirteenth century a pact of mutual guarantee had been signed which gave equal rights to Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Ruthenians. The idea of mutual respect and individual sovereignty was the basis of a cantonal union which held together longer than the union of Scotland and England. The oldest and greatest

Polish families came from Lithuania. Pilsudski was born near Vilna. Poles could not conceive of Minorities being used by foreign powers against them. They were mentally unprepared for German fifth column activity among their former allies. It took years to prove to them that the Germans were re-arming the Ukrainian and Ruthenian peasantry and were stirring up an animosity which never previously existed — taking advantage of social unrest. Hitler used the appeal of the worker against employer, the minority against Poland.

Only those who lived in the Eastern Provinces understood how serious was the situation. The rest of the country hoped to quiet the leaders with concessions and seats in the Diet. Our friends from the East told us of the talk current in the villages, of the effort to burn out Polish peasants in the Ukrainian province. "Many are fine people," they said, "good workers, thoroughly dependable. But the situation will grow out of hand, if hot-headed leaders are allowed to become martyrs in the hands of a routine police system."

Among our friends was a young couple whose houses and lands had been destroyed by the Bolsheviks after the last war. They had gone back to their farm and lived in their milk shed, while they had invested all their capital in machines and fertilizers rather than personal comforts. Their shed had no floor and mildew had crept halfway up the walls. As it was too damp for their children, they had to be sent to Lwow for eight years to live with their grandparents. At last in 1936 the farm paid so well — there was a turnover of \$25,000 on carloads of beet seeds sold to Germany — that my friends could build a house and bring their children home. They drew up their own plans which they brought to Warsaw to show us.

Hardly was the house finished than Ukrainians with burning torches marched through the village to their very gates. The head man shouted and swore ugly epithets to drive them from the village. Joseph went out unarmed to meet them.

"Friends," said he, "have I not always paid you well? You

have wages from me now, whereas before I built up this farm, you lived with difficulty from your land. If you burn my house and destroy my crops, who will pay you? Go back to the dishonest man who sent you hither and say, 'We are not so simple as to destroy the goose of the golden eggs.' Let him leave our countryside and give his idle talk to more foolish men."

The villagers talked among themselves. Finally one said, "What you have said is true." They began to break ranks and put out their menacing torches. "We would be foolish to burn this house," they agreed.

"Do not leave my gates before we break bread together," my friend pleaded.

Jadwiga, his wife, who was watching from the veranda, ran down the path with bread and salt. "Wait," she said, "the last year's mead is not too weak to drink our healths. Here is the bread and salt. Please come in."

The incident left them with no hard feelings. "I love the Ukramians," she said, "they are a noble people, fine workers. If only the government would find out who are the paid trouble-makers."

Joseph came to Warsaw to tell the Minister of the Interior what he knew. "Germany is sending in agents who distribute arms and money. One of my men was approached. The government must act immediately and with great caution before it is too late. The movement started among workers in Lwow and is spreading to the countryside. They preach the land is theirs by inherent right and should be taken by force from the Polish peasants."

"Do you believe they want to secede?"

"It's more a movement to get control of everything. Warsaw is so blind to the potentiality. When I tell them, they answer, 'don't spread panic.'"

"No Pole can touch another with arms," they said.

That in the long run Poles were justified in treating the people within her borders as a great family, sharing prosperity as well as the vicissitudes of history, is borne out by the many Germans who became Poles. The Mayor of Łódź, Bajer,

committed suicide rather than call himself a Reichsdeutscher when the Germans marched in in the autumn of 1939. One of the sons of the Pastor of the Lutheran Church, Professor Bursche, was a Polish pilot and killed in action. The other two died as did Bursche, in German concentration camps. The Fischers, the Wendes, the Meyers, the Wedels — all German Protestants — were so militantly Polish that not one of them has been found today who would form a pro-German Government.

CHAPTER 9

AFTER the murder of Minister Pieracki, you could hear reverberations and echoes from the furthest provinces. During the long winter we had all been gripped with dark forebodings. Now the sweet scented air of summer, like a gentle caress, made us forget those endless winter days when the sun which never pierced the fog seemed only to emphasize our obscure and melancholy future. Here at last was the season we loved the most ! There was the outdoor ballet and the theatre in the Lazenki Gardens. The alleys of beech trees were cut and fragrant. There were outdoor cafes in the parks and the promenade along the new cut stone embankment. I can never think of Warsaw in the summer without hearing again voices singing to an accordion across a meadow — and the song of nightingales in lilac-scented gardens. . .

Summer was always nearly over before we had even thought of leaving the city. I was therefore quite astonished one evening at dinner when John told me :

“Tony has asked us to meet him in Danzig.”

Tony had been the best man at our wedding. “Is he really taking all eleven nieces to the seashore !” I could not picture Tony travelling with his nieces, nor even imagine him as part of a family. He seemed to have sprung full grown into life. He never spoke of his childhood or his escape from the Bolsheviks. Though everyone knew his family had had one of the greatest Polish fortunes, he made fun of his precarious position as an émigré as if he had been born into it, with inevitable good humor. He was the art connoisseur, he had

dined with Noel Coward and wore an exactly similar silk handkerchief. He had managed his love affairs so successfully no one had ever been able to tell with whom he had had them. Wherever it was smart to be seen, Tony would be there, but he also enjoyed the most Bohemian parties and could always be found at four A M. at one of the artists' cafes.

"He is leaving the girls with some relative and then going on his pet freighter to London." London was part of his double life of which he never gave us any details

"I wonder how much longer he will keep up his London house." This was always a source of speculation.

"I believe he wants to rent it when he leaves this time. He still has the ex-sailor manservant to care for it," John explained between mouthfuls.

"He told me he was hard up again — something about his brother making more improvements in the country, new additions to the stables and hothouses " We always felt slightly guilty sitting down for dinner unless we were certain Tony had a previous engagement. The eleven nieces, daughters of his brother, were the cause of Tony never having married.

"I must provide a dowry for them , the poor dears have the choice either of going on the loose or taking to the veil," he would say. "My brother has piously produced them. He is far too religious to plan for their future."

"When you think of their all squeezing into that gatehouse, no wonder Tony escapes periodically to London!" They had moved into the Concierge Lodge at the time Mr. Dewey was financial adviser and continued in it while their house was used as the American Chancellory.

Tony maintained that even when he retired to the bathroom, his mother would plant her chair outside the door insisting there were things she simply had to discuss immediately with him.

Finally I asked, "Shall we go — what is the decision?"

I could have guessed the answer. John was always ready to go anywhere at a moment's notice.

"Let's meet him but not travel with him," he suggested, "if he really seriously means to travel by river boat."

The river boats were unbearably uncomfortable. They were built to carry freight and though there were one or two staterooms, I could well believe Tony would not have the funds to use them. "He is an angel to take the trip," I said with real conviction.

"It saves his mother," John wisely remarked. "He would do anything to relieve her."

"Is it so much cheaper?"

"It must be when you count twelve tickets," John was practical. You could see John wanted to go.

"Telephone him we will meet him Wednesday morning by the quayside at Danzig."

Dressed identically in black, the eleven sisters had occupied the whole prow of the small paddle wheel river boat that had brought them from Warsaw to Danzig. The little girls were still in mourning for their mother. Their grandmother had prepared immense hampers of food, dozens of little white rolls, eggs, butter and cheeses, and a cold chicken for each of the girls. Each carried a steamer rug in which she had rolled up on the deck. Though their faces were sunburned a bright scarlet, all eleven were in high spirits. They ran down the gangway and hopped into a bus which took us to the harbor at Gdynia where we were to take the steamer that crossed over the bay to Hel. When the bus came to a halt by the quay at Gdynia, a cold sharp wind was blowing. It made us shiver in our inadequately thin summer clothes. The glaring sun which seemed to pierce our eyelids and blanch our skin gave us no warmth. The pale blue sea was streaked with white caps and marked like a honeycomb where the squalls passed over the waves. It was clear that the little steamboat to which the girls raced so innocently would be hopelessly thrown about in the choppy sea. They hopped merrily aboard, taking possession of the prow with all their rugs and baskets. They were impatient once more to be going.

"You and Uncle Tony will sit in the middle," they called, showing how they had arranged places for us.

"How much longer do we have to wait?"

"Do we really go out of sight of land?" Each shouted a different question.

I shuddered at the very thought.

Tony whispered, "Frankly, I don't look forward to the trip — let's go in search of a little fortification."

"Will the girls be alright if we leave them?" Though the oldest might have been fifteen they seemed very young to leave alone. But Tony was reassuring. "They know all about travelling after 36 hours on the river," he said.

As we walked along the broad concrete quay, I thought of the eleven little girls sitting so cozily in the prow of the ship. "Oh, Tony, what if they all get seasick together!"

"Darlings, I'm thinking of that myself. If you really love me, you will stay behind," he begged.

I had dreaded the boat trip from the instant we caught sight of the sea. Crossing the broad cobblestone street at the quay side, we felt chilled to the marrow. "Getting seasick isn't really a social pleasure," I agreed.

"Why don't we all wait over until the wind dies down?" John suggested sensibly. As with the one impulse we had ducked into the nearest bar. The two or three other persons there were sailors. Upholstered bentwood chairs and tables and plain wood panelled walls, like everything else in Danzig, were new and the smell of tobacco smoke had not yet saturated them.

"It can't blow forever; tomorrow it may drop," John continued as soon as we had sat down.

"Suppose it gets worse?" Tony replied.

"Then stay on in Gdynia," John urged. "It's very comfortable here in Gdynia."

"My dears, pay for rooms for eleven nieces in a hotel when they can all stay for nothing with Marytka? You plutocrats!"

"Wodka?"

"Three, please."

"And *Kanapki*?"

"*Kanapki* —"

"Don't come with me, please don't!" Tony pleaded.

"What could we find to talk about on the boat ? Lay bets on which one would be seasick next ?"

"Then if you mean it, we will wait." How wonderful not to have to go ! I tried to hide my delight but John who really loved rough weather, replied, "It seems silly not to go with you when that 's why we are here in Gdynia."

Tony fortunately insisted we remain behind. "If the wind dies down, take the next steamer ; if it holds, wait for me."

"Then we will all meet in the Hotel Riviera," I cried, anxious the matter should be settled.

Tony, evidently relieved, proposed, "Another round to meeting at the Riviera."

It was time to depart. The tiny steamer gave its first warning toot. We stepped outside. The cold gusty wind sweeping across the cobbled street from the Baltic Sea felt like March. The frantic wind and the low angle of the sun were chill reminders of the north. But the little girls had opened their hampers and had settled down to finishing their rolls and chicken. They were chattering and giggling, totally unaware of the ordeal before them. With a shriek, the launch cast off. Hardly had it left the quayside when it shipped water, and spray had drenched the eleven nieces. We last saw Tony frantically shoving them and their luggage to the lee side of the steamer.

The Hotel Riviera, where we deposited our bags, was built in the summer resort section of Gdynia. Here the broad quay had been arranged as a park and planted with ornamental flower beds. There was a pavilion for band concerts, a boardwalk and a broad white sandy beach which swept as far as the eye could reach along the Polish coast towards Danzig. We followed the boardwalk to its end, along the dunes a mile or more out of town. The dunes piled up against a high bluff thickly grown with century-old oaks. An ancient, much used path with steps formed by the roots of trees led to the top. We scrambled up the steep footpath that looked as if it had followed the top of the cliff since time immemorial. Here and there someone had carved a rustic seat between two trees where there was a fine view of the white beach and

broad sea. The well kept forest had been cleared of fallen branches and undergrowth. The roots of the trees held large clumps of soft moss, tiny wild flowers and such grass as grows in the deep shade, covered the steep bank down to the sea.

Before we realized we had walked so far, we had come to the next village. There was a bathing establishment with modern cement bathhouses along the shore where we found we could rent bathing suits and towels, fresh from a sterilizing drum. The spacious bathhouses were equipped with showers, hand basins and a broad bench on which you could recline. We were now warm enough from our walk to relish a swim. But when we had put on the bathing suits and stepped down on the beach, the sand felt so cold and the water was so icy that we dashed back to the cabin as fast as possible.

While we were dressing, we realized we were famished. John looked at his watch. It was 3 30. "Where shall we have lunch?" he said, and quoted the Polish proverb, "The first place will be the best," and led the way across the road. A moldy, old fashioned hotel was set back in a grove of trees. Neither the fifty empty tables all set up on a glass enclosed veranda nor the sight of a waiter flicking dust with his napkin off the artificial flowers could discourage us. We were too tired to go further.

Luckily the waiter understood how hungry we were. "Shall it be omelet or hors d'oeuvre while the *Panstwo* are making up their minds on the dinner?" he asked.

"Let it be omelet, and *starka*," (a kind of rye).

The omelets covered a whole platter and we found it impossible to eat the ragout of veal we had ordered.

Gradually we grew warm again protected from the wind by the glassed veranda and the heavy trees. The sea was breaking in short high waves and the white caps came closer together. How glad we were we had stayed behind. Next summer, John repeated, I could go to Hel. He tried to describe that long narrow cape, stretching eighty miles out into the sea, so narrow there were places where you could see across it from the shallow bay, into the tumultuous Baltic.

He pictured the old fishing villages under the neat pine trees, and the colonies of modernistic summer cottages strung along both sides of the highway and railroad line.

Tony returned to Gdynia on the following day. His usual ruddy complexion had gone an oily yellow. For all his thick sandy hair and six feet two, he looked frail. But he managed to greet us with his usual flourish, "Well, my dears, it's lucky I kept you from going on our little picnic. It was nip and tuck mostly. The girls had to be helped ashore. I am rushing back to Warsaw tonight."

"What happened to your week's holiday?"

"I have to sell something, some family jewels, or livestock — anything in a hurry."

We laughed merrily.

"Nothing humorous about it that I can see. I have to set about selling the boat tickets to London and finding the girls' fare home. They won't return except by train. Having planted them on kind Marytka I can't leave them for more than two weeks. She has other guests coming" Tony's indignation was so droll it was hard not to laugh, even though we knew how serious was his plight.

As there was nothing to keep us in Gdynia, we too left by the evening train. In Poland no one needed to take a sleeper except at the holiday season when the trains were packed. All first and second class Polish railroad carriages could be converted into sleepers. The backs of the benches tipped up and were held in place by specially made wall brackets. You could rent pillows and blankets in the station. In each compartment four persons could stretch out at no extra expense. From the time of boarding the train at Gdynia until you left the Danzig Free State, there was no use trying to sleep. The Danzig customs officers stamped about the train making such fuss and commotion it was better not to try and settle down.

We leaned back in our places while Tony broke the news of his plans for leasing an apartment in Warsaw. He had found the very place — in the basement of a professor's house, with his own entrance through the garden, near his

mother's house and only around the corner from us. It would be a difficult apartment to decorate. The radiators hung high on the walls. Since you couldn't hide them or mask them he thought you could use them as part of the decorative scheme — perhaps paint them like the Venetian blinds. The large one in his bedroom could be arranged as futuristic organ pipes. We promised to take a hand in the painting and to lend him as much furniture as we could spare. At Danzig a passenger came into our compartment. When we found he was to leave the train after Torun, we gave him one of the lower berths. John and I took the two uppers hoping not to be disturbed. After we left the frontier the conductor came through the train, dimming the lights. Soon everyone was quiet for the night. We did not even hear the stranger leave the compartment at Torun and we were surprised to find a lady in his place when we waked up in Warsaw.

We left Tony at the station, expecting it would be two or even three weeks before we would see him again. We were aware it would be one of those periods when Tony had to find money.

"Don't call me up till you hear from me," he had told us. "This time I must seriously find a lot of money. You know my brother has bought an automobile. He signed my name to it. The worst of it is that he doesn't realize what he has done. Good-bye and God bless you."

How he did it was always very mysterious and as he never asked our help it was difficult to inquire into the particulars. If you telephoned to his house, however, early in the morning or late at night, his manservant always replied, "Mr. Count is at the Board of Directors." Tony's family had owned beet sugar refineries and he often complained of the number of salaries paid the officials when nothing could be squeezed out for him. He said there were times he hated to look in his pocket for fear he wouldn't be able to pay for his dinner. Yet he had always been the most sought after bachelor in Warsaw and his pockets had always bulged with invitations to Embassy functions and dinners. It was known he could

make the duller party a roaring success. However, these times of disappearing into board meetings were becoming longer and longer. He had become more restless and impatient with the "best" Warsaw society and he failed to show up anywhere except the President's receptions in the Zamek or the annual parties at the British and American Embassies. Tony had decided to be worth the salary he was determined to earn. His needs for money were endless. His brother's debts — his eleven nieces — his mother's few wants, and a host of impecunious artist friends for whom he in turn was always willing to go into debt.

In the taxi on the way home, the whole tragedy of his position burst upon us. "How I wish there were something we could really do to help Tony," John remarked affectionately. "When we are old, he will come and live with us. He will have sold everything he owns to help someone else and then we'll have to take care of him."

But we didn't have to wait long for Tony to telephone, in fact, we had hardly sat down to lunch when he called. "Did you hear Carol Szymanowski is terribly ill? (Carol Szymanowski was the greatest modern Polish composer.) "No one knows how long he will live. How much will you contribute every month? Not less than 100 zloty. Can you make it 200 (about \$40)? Aunt Marylka is giving 200 zlotys, and so are the Meyers. They need at least a thousand to send him to Grasso. Thanks, darlings. I'll be around later."

As usual he came about seven, too late for tea. Even before he spoke, you felt he was bursting with news. "You haven't kept tea for me? What a day!" He always kissed both hands with an affectionate mock seriousness, saying in English: "I suppose you are so Polish now you expect it. Girls and boys, I'm going abroad."

"When?"

"How did you arrange it? Where are you going?" John and I shouted in the same breath.

"I'm being sent by the *Literary News*. I'm going to

Berlin!" He told us of his chance encounter that morning with the editor.

"Well now, be careful."

"They think I know all the 'pinks.'"

"And is Berlin full of them?"

"Do you know everyone?"

"Enough to meet plenty of people and hear lots of gossip. Most of all it's lucrative. Very! If I do well, they may send me to Paris."

"I know the articles will be good — when do they commence?"

"Not till I return. You don't think I'd send them through the mail. I'm not going to Germany as a journalist. I'm just an ordinary old fashioned traveller from the back country seeing the wicked night life of the big capital"

"You'll be gone a long time?"

"As long as I like — six weeks — or two months. Don't fret — I'll bring you a souvenir."

"There's a card from your Aunt Marylka announcing her 'at home.'"

"You'll be good lambs and go — Good-bye."

"What about the money for Carol?"

"Jaz will take care of it, or you send it to the Meyers. Don't forget."

"How did you settle for your nieces?"

"Mother once gave me a string of pearls. I sold them for a ridiculous figure — not even 10,000 zlotys. I needed five right away for Carol. I've paid for the girls' tickets; they are out of hock. I paid off my brother's automobile — I hope he understands now. With what's left I'll go abroad."

"You'll get that back"

"When I come back I'm buying my freedom. I'm moving out — definitely. It's all settled. I'm going to have a magenta room with a pink ceiling that none of my family can stand looking at."

"Good-bye, Tony."

"Such sweet sorrow!"

"Gluptas !" (Idiot !)

Tony's career as a journalist lasted up until the day he was killed in the London blitz, while delivering the Polish Overseas broadcast for the BBC.

No matter what hour you arrived at Aunt Marylka's "at homes," a great many persons were already there. In the old days she like Tony, had been renowned for her snobbishness and the pleasure she took in having an elegant salon. It was certainly proof of her love for Tony that she had gone along with him to all the recent futuristic shows and seemed to share his passion for everything new Poland could create. Though late in her sixties, she spent much of her time reading modern philosophy and she did her best to understand the reasons and causes of modernistic art. In her salon she brought together those younger members of the old Polish families who had a vague and incoherent feeling of wanting to take part in the artistic life of the country with the very young artists who needed a public.

There were always a few middle-aged matrons who still thought it smart to be seen there. They sat primly together as if afraid of being contaminated by the strange young persons chatting so loudly in the corners. "Dear Marylka is going through a phase," they whispered together, "it's her second childhood !"

"All this craze for Jozio Czapski is a pose !" the ladies put their heads together, hoping no one would overhear them.

"Anything for publicity."

"You know he's here all the time."

"There can't be anything in it."

"At her age ?"

"She seems so fascinated by him."

"He is awkward and ungainly enough !"

"And seems so unconscious of women —"

"It's his talk — when he gets started he never stops. Dear Marylka does love talk."

They need not have whispered. Jozio was paying no attention to them. He was expanding his idea on art to a mixed group of people. He was the recognized leader of a

school of painters called after him "Capisti." They were the first group to come under the influence of modern French painting and break with the Polish tradition which had been dominated by that very dry photographic School of Neo-Gothic painters. Czapski did not believe in any form of neo- or pseudo-art. As we came in the room we heard him defending one of the members of his group who was being loudly criticized in the press for the way in which he had painted a ceiling in the Wawel in Cracow. He was fairly shouting. "You wouldn't tear down the Gothic additions to a Romanesque Church, would you? Well, and what about the Renaissance Choir stalls? I suppose you would remove the Van Dykes just because baroque painting has no place in a Romanesque Church. I'm surprised you don't criticize Leonardo da Vinci for painting his 'Last Supper' in the style of the day, instead of copying the Ravenna mosaics which were contemporary to the period of the building. Can you name any ancient edifice painted in a pseudo-art? Do we not see decorations of every period side by side? Were the Sforza family afraid to hire Montegna while Gothic painting was still in style? If the Polish aristocracy wish to be known to posterity, it will be through the contemporary monuments they erect. It's their honor and duty to be the patrons of modern art as during the Renaissance the nobility made that art possible."

We slid through the double doors into the dining room. The maid was passing tea and we helped ourselves from the bountiful plates of cakes and sandwiches laid out on the large table. The novelists Maryia Dombrowska and Zofia Koszak, and the poetess Illakowiczowna were chatting in a corner. They had been successful for so many years their presence no longer created a commotion. The niece of Joseph Conrad in her usual effervescent and sparkling manner was running from one to another, with an endless store of good-humored comments, "Ah there you are *kochanya*! Do you know everyone?" She really did. She had belonged to Pilsudski's underground organization from the beginning and she had known him well. Everyone in the gov-

ernment, from the Prime Minister down came to see her in her single shabby rented room. When she had an "at home" you could barely squeeze in the door and in the crush it was impossible not to rub elbows with all the most influential people. You would find yourself pinioned with the famous Bartel or Slawek, Pistor or Zaleski who always good naturedly returned to her parties. She was counted as a writer and a member of the Academy because she translated Joseph Conrad from English into Polish.

It was considered ill-mannered to remain after seven. Yet the young artists, unaware of this convention, never left as long as there was a cake on the table or tea being served. Aunt Marylka would often ask a few of her oldest acquaintances to stay through the evening and the conversation would then continue till one in the morning.

From the next room you could hear Czapski talking, "The difficulty for an artist in Warsaw is the lack of criticism, the give and take of the atelier," he was saying. "Our group will go stale unless we get back to Paris."

"Your shows have been successfully attended."

"That's important, surely!" For the first time Czapski's voice sounded impatient.

"And you have had plenty of quarrels with the press."

Like an eagle brooding over all he felt sacred, he sat high in his stiff chair, his arms embracing his unshakable belief in the sublime destiny of art. "One can't live by destructive criticism alone. Criticism must have something to offer."

"But you have sold quite well."

"That's another question. Seeing one's picture in a real room, with furniture, is a shock indeed. It is far easier to paint exhibition pieces. The point is the public treats us like a fad."

"Isn't it a fault to be dependent on Paris?" someone asked. "An artist should reflect his country of origin."

"That's to say art is not universal and should be narrowed down to the limited concepts of each country or each level of society in which the artist hoped to sell himself." Czapski nearly choked with rage at the very suggestion. He was six

feet tall, and had the saintly expression of a wholly selfless individual. He lived in an ill-heated attic room sharing everything with the dozen or so Polish colleagues that had studied together in Paris under Bonnard. Coming as he did from a gentry family, he was treated at first as a dilettante. It was with difficulty he established himself as a professional painter. However, he eventually gained not only recognition of his artistic ability, but also achieved considerable financial success. He was indefatigable in the way in which he attained commissions for the whole group, always making a greater effort to sell their work than his own. His title and social position attracted many persons to his exhibitions but he never accepted social engagements unless they promised to be useful for his artist friends. In posing the problem of national art in contrast to art universal to our western civilization, Czapski started an uproar. The conversation swelled into confused cross fire in which everyone shouted at the same time. Czapski was no longer able to command attention.

I had already decided to leave when Anieluszia (the niece of the writer Conrad) whispered in my ear, "Are you going tomorrow to the Marshal's?"

"I would like to; can you stop for me?"

"After four then —"

Promptly after four Anieluszia arrived as she had promised. During the night it had rained hard, now it was gently drizzling. The sidewalks were brown with leaves, and more rain-soaked leaves were dropping from the trees. Though the thick mat of leaves overhead had begun to thin, the street beneath the thick branches was dank and somber.

"It makes me sad," were her first words, "autumn has come!"

How quickly the summer passed!

"It makes me apprehensive," she remarked. "This is an ill omen. The Marshal has long been overworked. This is his first afternoon in several months." She was unable to continue talking for in spite of the rain and the late afternoon, the Alleja was crowded. We threaded our way with diffi-

culty between the women pushing perambulators, buttoned up against the rain, lovers loitering under the beech trees as if in disregard of the last few summer days. The clipped beech hedge hiding the apartment buildings bordering either side of the Alleja made a majestic frame for the whole scene. I followed Anieluszia's swift pace as best I could for many blocks. Suddenly we caught up with a familiar figure walking with a cane.

Countess Rose was nearing eighty. It was not surprising to find her alone on foot. She considered robust health as another would a virtue. When over seventy, she had flown in an open avionette, probably the first woman in Poland to do so. She had managed her own financial transactions and amassed a considerable fortune. All her life she had lived in Spartan simplicity. Following the real Polish aristocratic tradition, she never allowed herself luxuries and comforts. We both kissed her hand out of respect for her great age.

"You shouldn't do that," she said smilingly. "Are you going to the Marshal's? Then we can walk together."

"Have you come all the way on foot?" I asked, with amazement. I knew her house was at the other end of town, a good three miles from the Belvedere where Pilsudski lived.

"You should know I always go on foot," she spoke emphatically. "I never ride in town."

"When you were for dinner with us in Cracow you would not let us send for a cab even though it was a stormy night," I reminded her.

"That is the reason I am never ill. The other principle in which I believe is keeping my feet uncovered at night," she explained. "Too many covers make one soft."

Anieluszia and I both laughed from embarrassment.

"It's the Marshal's first 'at home,'" Anieluszia remarked.

"That is the reason for which I am in town. I never wish to miss such an occasion at my age." She had the gay voice and energetic step of a young woman.

"*Proszę Pani!*" we protested in unison.

"One never knows! Moreover, we must set the example

of self-discipline. Each generation of our aristocracy must give proof of their right to use their title. Unless they make a real contribution to society, they have no right to call themselves aristocrats. This generation must establish unity in Poland. Each young person should serve his country without prejudice. Many of us hoped to achieve Polish independence. It was Pilsudski who won it for us all. It is for history, not for us to judge his methods now. We have won our independence by our united opposition to our enemies. Today such inner unity is even more essential to raise our poor country from its ashes."

We both gave our complete assent.

She continued, "I have always said to my sons, 'Set yourself a program and follow it scrupulously.' For myself I rise at seven. During the morning I have certain hours for attending to my estate and writing letters, others for the foreign and domestic press and the reading of books by various statesmen. In the afternoon I also have a period for reading before tea-time after which one must be prepared for interruptions or social engagements." As she spoke I could picture her table stacked high like a reader's desk in an office, with books in Spanish, French and German, Italian, English and Polish. I could well believe no important book appeared in Europe without her reading it.

As we arrived before the gates of the Belvedere, she asked me, "Where is your husband?"

"He is at his office. He never knows when he can leave so I came ahead."

This seemed to satisfy her and we were all silent as we stepped into the hall. A row of doormen were taking the coats and umbrellas and helping with the rubbers of the steadily increasing crowd of officers and civilians. "I hope we are early," Countess Rose asked one of the men. "The Marshal has not as yet come in, my lady," he respectfully replied.

Waiters were passing tea as we entered the drawing room. The guests stood in groups — the military men had congre-

gated in one room, while the writers and politicians had taken possession of another. Anieluszia immediately joined the literary group and as soon as Countess Rose seated herself on a sofa, several young men from the Foreign Office came and paid her their respects. I stood back by the door waiting for John, where I could watch the arrivals. Each dropped his calling card in a large dish before entering the drawing rooms. Some greeted the footman familiarly; all had been there before. The hallway and drawing rooms were furnished with soldierly simplicity and the waxed floors shone in the lamplight. While I was still standing by the door, the Marshal came in. Though he was as erect as ever, he seemed to have shrunk in stature and his clothes hung more loosely than the previous winter. His piercing eyes under the heavy eyebrows showed signs of the crushing strain under which he was working. He moved with simple dignity, greeting his guests with kindness. He spoke a few words with each group as he passed around the room and sat down by Countess Rose for ten minutes. With every move he made it clear he neither expected nor would have enjoyed adulation. Then before John had arrived, he went into the room where the officers were standing and soon passed out of sight. Every unassuming gesture had shown his great distinction and as I watched him, I knew some day he too would be called father of his country.

In 1926 Pilsudski had returned to Warsaw to help organize the country he had fought to establish. During the five years after the end of the Bolshevik war, the Constitution had proved itself ineffectual. The relations between President Paderewski and his ministers was ill-defined; consequently the authority dissipated, the value of currency was undermined and the army became disorganized. After Paderewski resigned, several others tried to form governments, none of which had strength equal to the situation.

Under the circumstances, Pilsudski was convinced that the country needed a strong democratic constitution and at the risk of being called a dictator, he assumed authority until the

new constitution was formulated by the Polish Senate and adopted by popular referendum. Having no political ambition, he preferred to be Commander-in-Chief of the Army and, under the authority of the President, Marshal Pilsudski carried the title of Chief of Staff until the day of his death.

CHAPTER 10

THE two years between our return from Geneva and our post in Vienna were the happiest in my life. Everywhere in Poland they were years of fruition. By 1935, after 15 years of autonomy, the country really seemed firmly established. The more Germany was occupied with internal revolution, the greater our sense of security. At last the world would realize that Stresemann and Brüning had only created a façade to hide the deeply bellicose nature of the German people. Perhaps an anti-German League could be formed now that Hitler and the Germans openly sponsored a violent cause. Pilsudski instructed his ministers abroad to sound out foreign opinion and he himself did not vacillate to placate Hitler. Menaced by the German effort to take over the Danzig defenses, he ordered general mobilization of Poland. The Germans, not yet ready to fight, offered their apologies and a ten-year guarantee of peace. Ten years, we believed, would be time enough to organize world opinion. Yet everywhere we were told, "Hitler won't last a year." Whether in France, Italy, Britain or the United States, everyone said, "German public opinion won't stand him."

John would reply, "Don't delude yourself. Hitler is there to stay." It was clear to him the British wanted a strong government in Germany. Even he believed that statesmen would be sensible enough to form a common front against Hitler. Germany would not attack a united Europe.

If we were over-confident and lulled by false security, it was because apparently the Germans had backed down over Danzig. Though we knew that alone Poland was no match

for them, we were confident the world stood solidly behind us against German armed aggression.

In Warsaw those friends who, when we first knew them, lived in miserable tumbled-down houses, had now found apartments in the many new buildings that so completely changed the aspect of the city. They were busy furnishing their new quarters from the many shops which sold the textiles and pottery, hand-woven rugs and furniture cleverly designed by the art students. Along all the old business streets, these new shops had sprung up overnight. An air of well-being spread over the whole city. It was very rare to see an old woman under her steamer rug. In 1935 the working people wore silk stockings and fancy shoes and were better dressed than many of the officials whom I first met in Warsaw in 1925. That spring dressmakers had more orders than they could fill. My tailor was too busy to promise me a new costume before the summer. The street of milliners had overflowed into a whole section, and even peasants wore hats in the city.

The old aristocratic group was no longer in control of society. Warsaw was breaking into cliques. Little by little the ministries had dropped men with title and taken on "new blood." An aristocrat was at a disadvantage — those with titles were rarely promoted. Prince L. joined the Jesuits, Stas went back to farming, Witek went into law. Finding no place in government service, many of those with the most ancient names went into business. Prince S. sold coal, Count A. went into the steel business, Baron P. sold automobiles. Only the very modern-minded of the gentry survived the pressure of this crisis. It was only when they had made a place in business that they were offered a small restricted post in government service. In every office were new faces. They were self-made men whose father had been a labor leader or a waiter, a carter, or a peasant. These men were distrustful of past leaders, and were the product and the proof of Poland's new democracy.

Such changes greatly enlarged the circle of our acquaintances. While in Geneva we had met the generals and mili-

tary experts sent out to the Disarmament Conference, and now through them other officers of the General Staff. They asked us to their houses, to meet their plump wives from the country towns, newly come to Warsaw, who loved dancing and were excellent bridge players.

During these years my husband's work in the Foreign Office consisted in preparing the groundwork for a Baltic Union with Estonia, Latvia, and Finland and, it was hoped by many far-seeing people, with Lithuania. Everyone, even the simplest peasants could tell you that the day would come when Poland would once more join in confederation with all those states forming the triangle between the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. These are the states which Russia considers as her west wall and Germany her natural region of expansion.

My husband worked by day and at night searching for a sound working basis that would make the Baltic countries inter-dependent.

By mutual guarantees, the new Baltic Treaty was to be based on reciprocal trade agreements. But many such obstacles stood in the way! All three countries had agricultural exports — each being rich in timber and flax. All three countries needed capital and machine-made products. In the past journalists had repeatedly asked, "Why can't Poland live with her neighbors?" Here at last was proof that we could. How secure we began to feel. This would be an answer to France and her Russian alliance, France who had never treated us as an ally but only as a tool, who expected us to promise to attack Germany if she were attacked, but refused to give us the same protection. Now we were no longer what the European press spoke of as one of the French "vassal States."

The day that Poland signed the treaty of mutual guarantee with the Baltic States, was a day of popular rejoicing. Miss "Book" had tears in her eyes when she described the excitement among the children and the other teachers. They had been allowed to go to the great square to see the Baltic emissaries put wreaths on the grave of the Unknown Soldier.

After the ceremony, schools had been closed. "No one could work on such a day as this," she said. "Poland was growing in prestige and honor. We may not live to see it but surely once more Poland would lead the Slav States from the Baltic to the Black Sea."

"But will the Germans let you?" I asked.

"In 1410, we beat them at Grunwald, and in 1917 — we beat them again. We are twice as strong as they are — because we are united."

"The Germans are so much more powerful," I said.

"Now England and America will stop lending money to Germany," she stated naively. "Instead they may lend some of it to us. A Polish firm has sold a half million hams to America — can you believe it?" She spoke with as much pride as if she were the sole benefactor.

It was impossible to explain to any Pole how much less Americans knew of them than they knew of America, if only through the cinema.

"But Wilson gave us his support," she answered, as if to prove I was wrong.

"That was solely due to the personal influence of Paderewski," I tried ineffectually to explain. . . .

In working on the Baltic Treaty, we had been forced to remain in Warsaw for two years. John felt he was growing stale and losing his perspective. When the Librarian of the new Polytechnique Library asked him to prepare a bibliography of current studies on currency, banking and economics, John seized this excuse to leave for Paris and consult the Bibliothèque Nationale. "Paris for Easter and summer vacation in England at the British Museum," John had said, "and I can find out what's been written in the last two years."

But when we returned from Paris we found on John's desk urgent messages from the Foreign Office to report at once.

"I may be late for lunch. You know the Foreign Office," was John's comment on leaving the house.

This was a clear April morning, the sun filled our living room and I opened the French windows which gave out on the courtyard.

"It's so warm the baby can be out," I said to the nurse. "Take out his pen."

I began tugging at the branches from the rose bed. The roses were sprouting blanched leaves under the heavy hemlock boughs

"Come help me." I called Edward, our house-boy, but Makowska heard me. Taking the initiative, she soon had the beds cleared, and a great heap of boughs filled the courtyard.

"It looks so bare, *Pani* should plant primroses," she insisted. "I can get them on the Place of the Three Crosses. I saw women with baskets this morning — shall I go?"

"Tomorrow then — you will be late with the luncheon," I scolded her. But at the thought of the primroses I called the dog and ran out to the Place of the Three Crosses. On the south side women with baskets were screaming — "Lemons 10 groszy — lemons 10 groszy — lemons . . ."

"Have you seen primroses?"

"Lemons — ten groszy."

I pushed my way among the throng to the crossing. There the flower woman was putting up her stall and setting out her potted hydrangeas.

A woman with a big basket poked me in the back as she dove for the first courtyard. Turning I saw just in time that she had primroses. I ran after her but she had vanished. There was no one in the large empty courtyard. As I came out at the gate a policeman passed me. He too was looking for her. I pushed on along the square buying some blue hepaticas and little wood anemones rolled up in a corner of newspaper. But there were no primroses — only lemons, ten groszy. I came back past the doorway as the woman with the primroses was coming out.

"You have primroses? How much?"

"I have no license. I don't dare sell them."

I lifted the linen towel that covered the basket. "Follow me," I begged her, "I live nearby."

"How many does the lady want?" she asked cautiously.

"How much are they?" I asked.

"25 groszy the piece," she said crossly.

"Colossal price!" I said. "I will take them all at 10 groszy the piece."

"Fifteen," she replied lamely.

"They aren't worth that — I will take them all, but at 10."

"Good."

Every time I looked back she was following at some distance. As I reached the house she had quickened her pace and was abreast of me. As usual, Makowska was hanging out of the kitchen window. Not too politely she said, "So Madame went to town."

"Yes, I have some primroses."

"Bring them up," she commanded the woman.

"Didn't the lady buy them for herself?"

Edward was walking up and down by the front door in his white linen coat. "Master has telephoned he will be late."

"What time did he say?" I asked

"Not before three. Madame is not to wait."

Andrew was having his lunch, blowing his spinach in great puffs about his room. His nurse was bobbing about with a napkin saying, "He is so naughty because he heard you coming." The sun came in both windows. Someone in the next garden was singing and above all there was the continuous roar of aeroplanes.

Lunch was announced. In the dining room the door to the pantry was still open. Makowska and the flower woman were counting the plants. Makowska's voice was high, "It's a shame the Madame lets herself be cheated like this with all the primroses in Poland to be had"

I rang. "Don't announce lunch till you are ready to serve it," I said crossly.

Makowska was wreathed in smiles. "For Madame's home-coming there are veal cutlets, the first radishes, and green salad is already in — though very dear."

After lunch I lay down on the sofa in the living room while waiting for John to come home. I lay facing the light to see out of the window into the clear blue sky, so blue after the haze of Paris. How thrilling it had been to cross the Polish

frontier into this country in the making — so young and vital, yet with such high standards of the past achievements — a country made and built up by a great family of people who had always been too generous with their leaders, even those who had made the most fatal mistakes. Every time we crossed the frontier we wept with joy to see the growing prosperity of our country, the weedless fields, the small cement houses, the tile roofs, which were replacing the log cabins buried under thatch ; the five million acres which by Land Reform had been given to the peasants ; the eight hundred and fifty thousand buildings which housed eight and a half million people — the little towns where sewage pipes were being laid — the swamps criss-crossed with new draining ditches. As the train sped across the great plain, we hugged each other for joy that Poland was no longer grey and poor.

Through the open door I could hear the servants laughing in the kitchen. They were the house, but they were pleased to have me in it and proud of Andrew too. They were determined to make him a very great Pole. They would bring him up to be "President of Poland" — or "Bishop of Warsaw" ! As I lay before our fireplace, I felt the warm protection of such devotion. When Edward came in to take my coffee cup, he chatted, "Prince Zdzislaw is building — over there. They say Cziczewski from Silesia has bought next door. The house across the street will be finished soon "

The bell rang. It was not John, only the courier of the French Embassy leaving a card. His Excellency, the Ambassador of France and Madame Laroche — for M Laval on 12 May, 1935. I took the card to my desk and began opening the mail which had come in our absence. An "at home" at the Greek Minister's for that very afternoon, lunch with His Excellency, the Minister for Belgium on Thursday — I must telephone at once to explain the delay in answering ; dinner and soiree at the Swedish Legation on Monday, a note from Savery welcoming us home — John will want to call him as soon as he returns from the Ministry ; Friday a reception for M. Laval at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I had just finished when I heard John at the door.

"Guess what it is all about."

I couldn't.

"Vienna. They want me to report there this week."

"This week!"

"I wish we didn't have to leave Warsaw, but both Tadzio and Pawel consider I must. The Ministry would take it badly if I didn't accept."

"What will the work be?"

"It's a special mission. They want a report on the economic situation of the Danubian countries and the possibility of forming a Danubian Economic Bloc."

"These cards that have come in . . ."

"Answer them — you can go alone."

"How long are we to be separated?"

"As long as it will take you to pack."

"Do we take the furniture?"

"Better not. A moving is as bad as a fire in the house."

"Then I can pack in two or three days. Can't you wait to begin your work next Monday?"

"I am late already. I should have begun working today."

"Have you had your lunch — it's nearly four."

"No time. Having seen the chief of the Western Division, this means I leave the Eastern. I signed up with the personnel office and had my new passport made out. I had to get photographs made up in a photomat, and while waiting for one and another I saw Pawel and Tadzio. We will wait to telephone the family this evening, I have a few people I must see at once."

"Is your mission a secret or can I tell everyone?"

"It's official, but wait till I have left tomorrow."

Salary? — baggage? — trains! My mind was like a pin-wheel spinning out of control. "Makowska!" I called. "Take all the linens to the sewing room where I can sort them out and have the trunks brought out and cleaned. We are leaving for Vienna."

"Better take a week to pack calmly," John urged. "I will come back next week-end and fetch you. Perhaps we can

drive there by car. Go to the Buick Agency and see at what rate you can trade in the old car and order the international tryptich made out at the Automobile Club. You will need to get passports for the servants and Andrew, unless the Americans will let you put him on your passport."

"You know they won't."

"Well, you can try. He's only a baby. Then you could try to rent our apartment — call in Pentkowski. Now I must run."

While he was out I feverishly went over in my mind the things I must do. I tore up the letters I had just written and telephoned the Legations. "Do come alone." — Alone! — would I have the courage to enter a salon alone? — without John's supporting arm? I had watched women enter drawing rooms alone, always a pace too fast or too slow. They showed their self-consciousness either by too great self-assurance or too painful timidity. It was a question of age — the young were always conspicuously graceless, and not even all the older ladies had poise.

Between telephone calls I made lists on one column of things to take and on another of things to be left. There was a separate sheet of items to be attended to in town

That evening, on the way to the station John gave final instructions. I was to prepare the list of names and addresses where cards should be sent, marking by each name how many cards were to be left with the corner turned down and the P.P.C. in the corner. The French Embassy Ball was to be Sunday. Most of our friends would surely be there; we would then tell them good-bye.

A week later John returned for the reception for Laval at the Becks'. There was a tremendous number of people crowded into the four or five drawing rooms. We worked our way through the first two rooms crowded with diplomats to the third room where members of the Foreign Office were talking in close groups.

"Pilsudski is very ill, the doctor from Vienna has been summoned."

"No one knows exactly what it is."

"They say he is so shrunk in size."

"That means cancer."

"Perhaps he can be operated on, it need not be fatal."

Mr. Beck was standing in the center of the room where everyone could have a word with him. His mask-like face showed none of the strain of the importance of this occasion. No one looking at him could have guessed Laval had refused Poland equivocal support in any future war with Germany.

"I thought you were in Vienna," he told us.

"I am here for only three days, Mr. Minister. I am going back to Vienna with my family on Monday."

"How are you?" he spoke graciously as each person entered the room, and without listening further, passed them on to someone else.

Laval's visit was being discussed in undertones "He has an arrangement with Russia in his pocket," someone said.

"We can't agree," John replied, "to Russian occupation of Poland if Germany should attack France"

Someone else suggested, "The Russians will attack us anyway, they want a common frontier with Czechoslovakia; better give them some of the southern Carpathians on condition they don't take more"

"Appetite comes with eating, give them some they will take more"

"It's a question of strategy — how can the country best be defended?"

"Bukowina could never be held."

"Our only real protection is the Pinsk (Pripet) Marshes. Napoleon learned their strategic value," with a laugh

"The sooner Poland shakes free of France, the better. The French take, but they give nothing." There was little enthusiasm for Laval's mission.

On Saturday we sent off our trunks by express. The house looked forlorn and bare, and even flowers could not hide the chill emptiness. Though the packing had been done downstairs, there was a sense of excitement and perpetual disorder in all the rooms. Saturday passed in a frenzy of trips to the station, to the bank, and to Cook's.

Every acquaintance we met would say, "Congratulations on your appointment."

"We really regret leaving Poland just now."

"You are so lucky — all the same I wish I were leaving."

"What is the news of the Marshal?"

"You have heard the doctor came from Vienna?"

"Father says it is cancer; he is shrunk beyond recognition."

"Cancer! What a catastrophe, if anything happened to the Marshal!"

The Sunday crowds were gaily dressed in new straw hats and light spring suits, though a wintry wind howled through the half-opened leaves. We pushed our way among the loiterers strolling on the Place of the Three Crosses and the Aleja. Unlike everyone else, who was showing off his fine new clothes, we were in a hurry. We had to say "good-bye" to all our family, a duty left to the final day.

"What is said in town about the health of the Marshal?"

"Tell us the latest news."

"It may drag on for months, but he is a sick man."

"You will enjoy Vienna, it is such a beautiful city. When I was young I knew many people there; I must look through my address book and send you letters."

"Good-bye, dear aunt — till we meet again."

"Yes — till we meet again — perhaps not on this earth"

"Surely this is not good-bye — this is only till we meet again. We will write."

"Yes, write often"

Tony and Tadzio were coming for dinner — to go with us to the French Embassy Ball. At home order had been restored. Our clothes were laid out, neatly pressed, — on the dresser was the box of fresh flowers John never failed to remember.

"Darling, the wind has blown your hair out of place."

"Does it look hopeless? That is the worst of a Sunday reception, you can't get to a hair-dresser."

"Perhaps Makowska can help you."

"Let's not call Makowska," I pleaded. "Our last evening

in this house. How I hate to leave home. I feel sad with premonition."

"Are you afraid of the riots in Vienna? The shooting of Dollfuss left the city more peaceful than ever." As usual, John tried to calm me. "The German putsch was a failure."

"I feel uneasy all the time, a black premonition." My eyes burned and for the moment the whole future seemed very obscure.

Before we had finished dressing there was a knock at the door. "Mr. Count has arrived. He is in the room of Andrew."

The cold morning wind had died down, the evening air was soft and still. Arc lights, veiled by the trees, set off the streets like a stage. As we sauntered over to the French Embassy, we joined with others also sauntering in evening dress. All the streets surrounding the Embassy were filled with smooth moving, gaily dressed crowds like the Harlequins of another epoch, like a scene from Watteau.

"Was Laval impressed by what he saw?" each asked.

"Will France now give up her Russian dreams?" someone else remarked hopefully.

"What a lovely evening for a party, not a cloud in the sky."

"There will be champagne until morning."

"We must be late, some people are leaving already."

"That is strange, it is only 9 30."

Then meeting one of those who was leaving the French Embassy — "Have you heard the news? Pilsudski has just died — only ten minutes ago."

"It is not possible. *Boze!* Our poor country."

"*Straszne! Straszne!*"

"How terrible."

"What will become of Poland?"

"Poor Poland!"

We had moved nearer and by now we were standing before the very door of the Embassy. A string of open *dorozki* that had brought guests were still loitering by the curb.

"What does the lady say?"

"Not our Marshal!"

"I marched with him. What a leader !"

"Now our poor country will face calamity."

"Yes, the Germans will come now."

"What do you say — the Marshal does not live !"

"Does not live — Holy God !"

"What a catastrophe for Poland."

Tears ran down the cheeks of the cab driver and of the taxi chauffeur who had joined us.

"Our poor country — our poor country — Holy God."

"No one can take his place."

"No one."

Now around the French Embassy a great crowd had quietly gathered as the terrible news pierced deeper and deeper into it. As a foretaste of the doom to follow, the whole street filled with tearful people whose one and only thought was that Poland had lost her leader and her security. The frightened people roamed the streets unable to quiet the anxiety of their hearts. A moan of lament rose softly in the night from those who could find no place of rest, peace or safety.

By the next day the heartbroken people were given "something to do." They formed in line and filed past the bier on which Pilsudski was lying in state, they left wreaths on the steps of the Belvedere where he had lived. Children walked in to the city from the outlying villages. The main streets were roped off for the delegations marching on foot and the only automobiles which circulated carried frenzied officials from one government office to another. All the length and breadth of the city, every street was crammed with a seething crowd pushing its way down towards the cathedral or back to the Belvedere. The people were as numb and cold as they were sorrowful. Wild rumors of German invasion spread through the crowd, filling the hearts with panic. When the Germans neglected this golden opportunity to strike, the people believed that the Polish Army truly must be a mighty force.

By the time Pilsudski was laid in state in Cracow, the country had regained confidence in their army and their government. It had lost that utter, absolute unity which the past

days of danger had given them — and began once more to complain about the funeral, and bicker over the new Minister with the complacency of security. We had gone to Cracow for the funeral. We had watched the procession of tanks and anti-aircraft guns, the motorized field radios and telephones, and had been amazed at the extent of the motorized equipment.

"The Czechoslovakian soldier is more smartly dressed," the American military attaché whispered to me, "but those motorized field radios are something very new."

"Do you really think the Polish Army is good?" I begged.

"If it weren't, Germany and Russia would have divided it long ago. Still in the long run it isn't enough — Poland is indefensible."

"You don't really mean it," I said desperately.

"I most certainly do. Poland hasn't a prayer the day Germany and Russia get together. The Army will be squeezed in a nutcracker."

"The Polish soldier is hard and enduring."

"Bravery and mechanized equipment aren't enough with production and supplies cut off. Come now, you don't really think Poland can survive?" he said. "The day the Germans and Russians move in here there is nothing the Poles can do."

"You will see," I said with bravado. His pessimism I took for defeatism. "You have something to see," I insisted. "Every man, woman and child will stand."

CHAPTER 11

WE LEFT for Vienna in an optimistic mood because Germany had not broken her treaty and seized Poland at once. We felt there was still time to solidify our resources within the country and strengthen our political ties, by closer alliance without. The Polish General Staff decided to move all vital industries back from the Silesian frontier. It chose that farming section where there was the greatest overpopulation. It was in the center of the country and of the new railroad system. It was hoped that this triangle could be defended from all sides. Their decision was criticized by the businessmen, for heavy industry had all been organized about coal pits in the Silesian mines on the German frontier.

John was sent to Vienna to prepare the economic foundation of a Danubian League, like the alliance Poland had made with the Baltic States. He was attached to the Polish Legation in Vienna with the special mission of making an economic survey of all the Danubian countries. This was to be the foundation of a special trade treaty between Poland, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Rumania, as it had with the three Baltic countries of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. The Eastern European Bloc of ten, stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea, was to be bound by such mutually beneficial economic ties that political unity would inevitably follow. In his report to the Polish Foreign Office John based his study on fundamentals of area, population, agricultural production, of wood and metal industries, of transportation and the finances of the region. He made a statistical study of the capacities to grow grains, corn and rice,

potatoes, sugar and flax, and tobacco, wine and beer, livestock and its products, coal, iron and steel and other metals. Czechoslovakia, he found, held a traditionally important place not only among Danubian but European countries because of its production of glass and china. It was a natural leader due to the intelligent organization of the Bata shoe industry which played an important role in Czech exports.

A large part of the Austrian exports depended on the development of its luxury trade in high class leather goods and men and women's clothes, and its tourist resorts brought in foreign exchange. He analyzed production in every country, giving tables and statistical charts to substantiate each point.

Going on into the question of transportation, he found that Czechoslovakia and Austria had sufficient railroad lines. Some lines could even be demolished because of the new express highways. Though Hungary had enough railways, her highways were insufficient. In the three southern states, however, the railroads inherited from the old Austro-Hungarian Empire were completely inadequate to the economic needs of the countries and did not correspond to the real lines of communication. In Bessarabia, for instance, lines led to Odessa, and the northern Rumanian lines converged on Budapest. In Yugoslavia, the Vienna-Budapest-Belgrade-Constantinople line ran counter to all possible logical needs of the country. The connecting of Belgrade with the wonderful natural harbor of Spalato had to be made by the new state.

But the really important line of communication, he found, for this whole region was the Danube, with its tributaries. Practically the whole oil of Rumania was transported up the river — as were potatoes from the three southern states — while Germany and Czechoslovakia filled the ships with coal on the down voyage.

The international crisis had hit the Danubian countries as everywhere else abroad. New capital rebuilt factories destroyed in the previous war as well as new factories which the post-war frontiers made possible. New capital, though

large in extent, was charged at a very high rate of interest. Because of the high rate of interest, costs of production were so high that products could not be bought generally, and industry was a great drain on these countries. High costs kept down the standard of life and in turn restricted the volume of internal markets. Then foreign capital ceased coming and it is a fact that the Danubian countries — new countries — could not pay their old debts without incurring new ones. Foreign capital invested in 1929, he said, "will be found to be lost."

The run of creditors on these countries first hit the agriculturists, who had to throw in their gold savings. This weakened the finances of these countries and in turn foreign creditors lost confidence in the Viennese through whom the loans were made. The run of great international capitalists on the Viennese banks started a run of the Austrian depositors. In the summer of 1937 the Austrians were forced to pass laws protecting their credit on the one hand and on the other hand to call in the League of Nations for assistance. The Hungarians, who also had many foreign loans, followed by 'freezing credits.' Thus the banks of Rumania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria were paralyzed. In all four agricultural countries a grave fall of prices followed. All four had to adopt radical agrarian laws. In all four countries, following the agrarian reforms, savings banks then showed a slow rise — though these countries were far from coming out of the crisis before the present war.

John was still compiling statistics for his report to the Foreign Office, when on Sunday morning the Polish Legation learned from the newspapers that the German Government had given a protective guarantee to the Austrian frontiers. He dashed back to tell me that the staff was in utter consternation.

"The Minister certainly was stunned," he said. "He had boasted for a long time that Von Papen never saw anyone in the Foreign Office without sending him a memorandum."

"What does it all mean?" I asked. "It sounds harmless."

"There must be much more than appears on the surface or

we would have had a copy of the note at least twenty-four hours ahead."

"This will be a blow to our Minister's prestige with Warsaw."

"I only hope it wakes him up to the caliber of Von Papen."

"Everyone says 'Von Papen is only a tool,' " I repeated what I had so often heard.

"That doesn't make Von Papen any less dangerous. He escaped being purged by a fluke, and now he is like butter in Hitler's hands."

"He looks like such a gentleman, like a picture of Washington, and his wife and daughters seem so innocuous," I ventured. I could picture the three ladies in my mind's eye as I had seen them under such different circumstances. We were on the "first" list of the German Legation and were invited to all the German functions. Madame von Papen often asked us informally to tea and to join them on picnics. She was a faded broomstick of a woman. She and her two ageless daughters appeared to be the quintessence of the old-fashioned German aristocracy of another age. Modern dresses hung shapelessly from their shoulders. Their long white kid gloves and fans, the little ostrich feathers and the little locket they often wore, baubles of the Eighteenth Century, were the only objects that fitted them. Even when they went on a picnic they looked as if they had stepped from the frame of an old pastel. In birdlike voices they tittered and chattered, happily agreeing to the most contradictory statements. At church they were always in the front row oblivious of everyone around them. Dressed in plain black, they knelt through the entire service. Could these pious women be the conscious accomplices of the most dangerous envoy in Hitler's galaxy? It was far pleasanter to believe that both the Von Papens and the good-natured Prince and Princess Erbach, Councilor of the Legation, then learning how to betray Greece in the capacity of Minister to that country, were simple county gentry serving their Governments. It was, however, impossible to drown out the persistent question, "Can anyone work for Hitler without having sold himself to

Hitler? No man can serve two masters. Hitler must be sure of them or they would not be here." I had to make myself believe this as I searched in vain for something to dislike in their disarmingly affable personalities.

The Polish Minister left for Warsaw in the evening to try and explain, not only what the new situation in Austria would mean to Poland, but how it was that Von Papen, his oft-vaunted close friend, had delivered the note without at the same time sending him a memorandum explaining it.

John considered the note to be an answer to the Polish effort to form a customs union with the Danubian States. He cancelled his proposed visits to Rumania and Bulgaria and decided instead to send in his report to the Polish Government as fast as possible. "Travelling about is fun, but what I did last year is enough," he said. "Now there is no time to be lost."

Although he was already depressed by the lack of time and sense of emergency, many of his friends and colleagues took the German note at its full value. After puzzling over the idea of issuing a unilateral declaration, they dismissed it as a face-saving effort on the part of Hitler, who evidently had renounced the notion of the Anschluss.

Not so the Czechoslovakian Minister, Mr. Frulinger. On the following day, Monday, he invited the members of the Little Entente and Polish Legation for luncheon. Very informally, about the luncheon table, problems connected with defense were discussed. The Czechs saw real threat of danger in the proclamation. Even then it was apparent that by making Austria neutral, Hitler had blocked the passage of Yugoslav troops to Czechoslovakia, according to the original plan of the Little Entente. If the Austrians would not allow passage of Yugoslav troops to aid in the defense of Czechoslovakia, we had to consider alternate routes. While the ladies withdrew to another room, the men hung over a map, tracing roads down through Rumania which the Yugoslavs would thus be forced to use, adding at least five more days before effective aid could arrive. Someone calculated how far German tanks could travel in five days. It was clear

that help would not arrive soon enough to prevent the fall of Prague, and that the line of the Warsaw-Vienna Railway would be the place for a stand. Though everyone realized that Austria and Hungary could not be depended upon, the rest of the Little Entente seemed firm.

After the gentlemen had finished their conference, they joined us in the very room in which Beethoven had first conducted his symphonies to his patron, Loepkowitz. It was a two-storied, vaulted room with Baroque frescoes on walls and ceiling. Sprawling figures pulled aside looped curtains to show the heavenly blue sky and floating clouds. Like nearly all old palaces from Rome to Warsaw it had been rented out, and the family lived in a few rooms in a remote back wing.

John whispered, "Private capitalists haven't built a monument equal to this. They tear down as fast as they build. Why haven't they mastered a style and put their stamp on it for future generations to admire?"

The other guests had risen and were waiting their turn to take leave of our host. When it came our time, Mr Frulinger said to my husband, "Tell your Minister how sorry I am he could not be here. We will be seeing you very soon again, it's always so easy to talk to you."

"It's a privilege to be here," John replied with great conviction, and as we went down the great round stairs, "Frulinger is one of the biggest men in Central Europe." Shortly after this luncheon he was recalled as Secretary of State of Czechoslovakia, and then sent as Minister to Moscow, where he remains today.

Out on the street the air was soft. "Shall we walk home?" "Let's."

"Is war so imminent?" I asked.

"You heard the report of the American Military Attaché just back from Berlin — unimaginable re-arming in every line. War will come within the next few years unless . . ."

"Unless?"

"Unless we find more than just a formula for uniting the Eastern States, and get guarantees from England."

"England will never give them."

"You sound so positive. All the Czechs are more friendly of late," I said.

"They are always charming as individuals. The Government is constantly blackmailed by the French, who do everything in their power to prevent the formation of the Agrarian Bloc."

"But I should think it was to French advantage to have a strong Eastern alliance."

"If the Eastern Bloc were united they would become too strong and independent for the French. They are afraid we would slip out of their grasp."

"Are the Germans sincere about backing the Bloc?"

"It's an anti-French coalition obviously, and they hope to win the agricultural states into their orbit. That is why I don't like this statement of Hitler's yesterday."

"So many people think it means peace"

"I think it is the beginning of the Anschluss. What is the idea of guaranteeing neutrality if there aren't strings to it?"

"You are the perpetual pessimist"

"So everyone else says. But the first fruits are clear, to-day the Austrians were afraid to go into a real protective alliance with Czechoslovakia."

"Will Poland?"

"Surely, if the Czechs wish it. They prefer their alliances with Russia and France. Unfortunately they put all their faith in the big powers. You will see that they will get nothing more out of France than Poland did. Has France ever once in any treaty promised to come to the aid of the Eastern States? She has not. She expects us all to sign the Locarno Treaty, but refuses to make a treaty of mutual guarantee."

"Don't the Czechs have a secret clause?"

"Only the Russo-French treaty. In case France is attacked, Russia can occupy Czechoslovakia, like the treaty we wouldn't sign"

"Do you really believe the attack will be to the East?"

"Absolutely. No one doubts it."

"Except the French."

"Yes, the French."

"But why? The French are stronger, and why should Germany leave the stronger army at her rear?"

"For the very reason that if the French won't guarantee our frontier she obviously won't move unless she is actually attacked."

We were walking along the Ring now, and across it towards the Agentinerstrasse where we lived, in the house next door to the Legation. It was a warm spring day, and along the sidewalks every seat was taken in the enclosures of the café houses

"Vienna still seems like an outpost of ancient Rome, the physique of the people . . ."

"Yes, and in the Aurelian philosophy of 'live and let live.'"

"That is why I don't understand Dr. Lempke being a Nazi."

"It's because he is convinced that after the Anschluss, Austria will conquer Germany."

"Well, why is Prince Liechtenstein a Nazi? What can the aristocracy get out of Hitlerism? I understand why all innkeepers are Nazi, they look for trade. But the aristocracy —?"

"You heard Johnny say it's being abreast of the times. The aristocracy lost out in the French Revolution; they want to play winner this time."

"Austria wouldn't really join Germany of her own volition?"

"Not now. Her gold reserves are so much greater than Germany's, but if they can make a deal with the German Government they would find large popular support."

"I know. I was astonished that the neighboring shopkeepers near Aunt Marylka's in Corinthia were such outspoken Nazis. I don't see how they can patronize such people."

"Well, what about the sons and daughters of Countess Serrthoss? They went across the line to vote for Hitler a few weeks ago."

"Their mother is an American, too."

We said nothing as we walked across the Karlsplatz, feeling for the hundredth time that we belonged to another gen-

eration. We couldn't laugh with Carlo when he told about giving castor oil to the Italian liberals. We still clung to a definite moral code — yet how many of our diplomatic acquaintances laughed at us and believed a compromise with Fascism was inevitable in this changing world.

Suddenly John spoke. "There simply is no time to lose. I could get my report done if I were alone and didn't have to be tied down to coming home for meals and evenings, and if I didn't have to take a vacation this summer."

"How much have you still to do?"

"I don't know. But if I were alone —"

"You don't really mean you want me to go away. You have never said I interrupted your work before," I said, feeling quite desperate. "Have I ever mentioned your being late for meals?"

"No," he said very gently. "Even so, the idea that I have to turn up inevitably breaks into my time."

"You know I'll do what you want."

"Well then, take Andrew to Cracow so that I can get the report done. I may bring part of it on ahead, since I don't trust it to mail or to the pouch. The sooner you go, the quicker it will be finished."

CHAPTER 12

*T*HE day train to Cracow left Vienna at nine in the morning, and during the long hot day it crossed the Moravian plain. On every siding were flat cars piled with war materials which kept Andrew running from one side of the train to the other.

"See the big cannon, Mummy! See the big tank!"

All day long there was no keeping him quiet.

"Andrzej," he said in Polish, "wants to look — wants to see the big guns."

Here and there a few soldiers were on guard at way stations, but most of the trains had no guards. There was no indication on the cars of the destination of the guns. Nor did any of the passengers turn to look. From time to time we stopped beside a train going in the opposite direction. It was often said the Czechs were wasting no money building new rolling stock that would fall into the hands of the Germans. Most of these local trains had the old-fashioned short wooden cars with exaggeratedly large open platforms like toys.

"Funny train!" he said. "Andrzej's not sleepy. Andrzej sees a funny train!"

The thick June hay was cut and drying in the peaceful summer sun. Women were slowly sweeping the rolling fields clean while men stacked the hay in neat piles.

At every station our carriage would empty out and new passengers would fill it up, women in heavy skirts and blouses, men in old-fashioned green woolen suits. The Czechs were not 'smart,' but how neat and clean, each with

his one little leather suitcase ! Such a contrast to the Poles who you could always recognize travelling, by the many boxes and oversized suitcases. The Poles took possession of their seats with the air of habitual travellers, with rugs and pillows, drinking cups and towels, transforming their corner into a little bit of home.

At Cieszyn, the Polish frontier, the whole landscape changed. The big empty country was cut into small narrow strips of fields. New buildings crowded even to the frontier, and people, too, were everywhere. A procession of carts was strung along the highway, and there all about the countryside people seemed to be moving, and moving swiftly

"*Polska*, — Andrzej's Poland," Andrew said to the customs men who went through the train carriage by carriage as it dashed on to Cracow.

"What is in that box ?"

"Food for the trip. I have a diplomatic pass"

"Open it," said the customs guard "And in that bag ?"

"The baby's clothes — the nurse's — that is mine."

"Open the child's bag."

At the sound of Polish being spoken, the dog, who had crouched under the seat all day, came out and wagged his tail.

"You understand Polish ?" said the officer pleasantly. "Where are the dog's papers ?"

I got out the dog's pass, with all his visas and exits, his ticket, his health certificate.

"Much the dog has travelled," he said, saluting as he shut the door of our compartment.

The train was travelling much faster now. Once we had passed the Czech frontier it gathered up speed on the smoothly laid tracks. At seven we would be in Cracow. Soon the old chalk cliffs appeared on the horizon. The vast plain was now drained with neat ditches, stone at the bed and clipped grass on the rims. The tall wheat blew back as the train rushed by, and birds rose up, circling high in the evening sky.

"There," I told Andrew, "are the hills that Poppy loves

so. That ridge runs into Cracow. Now watch carefully for the *Kopiec Pilsudski*."

"What's a *Kopiec*?"

"A hill dug up in memory of some person like that big mound you can see over there."

"Andrzej can make it."

"Not Andrzej — hundreds and hundreds of school children, and thousands of grown people from all Poland made it by filling wheelbarrows and mounding the earth."

"All Poland? Why, there are two *Kopieccy*!"

"The other is the *Kopiec Kosciuszko*. That was made a hundred years ago. Now you can see the Wawel, — that great castle covering the hill."

"Who lives there?"

"The Polish king once lived there, seven hundred years ago."

"Is that long ago?"

"See how lovely! The Wawel!" That first glimpse of the spires gripped my throat so tightly I could not go on to explain what the Wawel meant to all Poles. "Now *Dziadzius* (the grandfather) will be waiting at the station looking at his watch every minute to see when Andrew is coming."

"And Babby (the grandmother)?"

"*Babcia* is probably waiting in the garden, with a big sand-pile for Andrew."

"Why doesn't Babby come to the station?"

"So as not to crowd the taxi."

"Why doesn't Babby have an auto?"

"*Babcia* gives all her money to poor people, so that the poor people can have something to eat."

"How many poor people?"

"Seven or eight thousand poor people. Look — there is *Dziadzius* right by our carriage." He seemed to know which car we would be in and was pointing us out to two porters. As the train drew in very quickly one had jumped into the carriage and was handing the baggage out to the other who stood under the open window. I handed Andrew through the window too. All the while Tatus was smiling and blow-

ing kisses to Andrew. "*Dzien dobry. Bon jour. Dzien dobry,*" he kept repeating until I descended, and then said, "Michael is in Cracow; he came down for the day to see you. Let us hurry. Mother will be impatiently waiting."

My father-in-law had a pass. Taking Andrew in his arms and leaving the maid and me to run after him as best we could, he led the porter with the wheelbarrow. We were the first out of the crowded station. There was something in his bearing that impelled the crowd to part before him. By the main entrance he had two taxis, already reserved, one for us and one for the maid and bags, and away we drove through narrow streets honking incessantly, the pedestrians scattering before us.

"You are very nervous," he remarked. "A few days' rest and you will be better."

"Even if it took but five minutes longer, Tatus, driving a bit more slowly would be so much pleasanter," I begged.

"This is a good driver. I always get him when I can."

As we rounded the corner of our street you could hear the two dogs barking. The curtains in the living room were parted where Mother was watching for our approach. Before we drove up to the house, the door opened and dogs and servants had come running out.

"You must see the roses," Tatus said, "before going upstairs."

"It's so late. Andrew is way past his bed time."

"Just once won't hurt him."

Mother was hugging us, drawing us toward the doors leading to the garden. The house was cool, almost cold. It had been closed up all the day, and the curtains were still drawn. But now the hot sweet air of the garden was rushing in through open doors that led out on to the terrace. On every table both in the hall and the drawing room were bouquets of flowers, hundreds of roses and great heads of peonies.

"How sweet everything smells! Strawberries! What wonderful ones this year!"

"This basket is only of pineapple strawberries. Try some.

They will be refreshing after the journey. This dish is just for Andrew, the latest from the garden."

"He is only three. He shouldn't eat so many!"

"From our garden? How could they hurt him? Were they bought, then you could never get them clean, even if they were washed in alcohol."

Andrew had run down the terrace steps, into the garden. "May I go on the grass?" he called.

"What a poor city child!" the grandparents moaned.

He ran across the grass to the yellow roses which bordered the outer path around the garden and knelt down to smell one. "*Jakie ładne*," "How lovely!" he said.

The grandfather melted in ecstasy. "That's surely my child!" he said. "Neither one of my own sons understands me as well as does my grandchild!"

Taking my arm he showed me which rose plants he had put in that spring.

"How many roses are there now altogether?"

"Over a thousand plants, but there are only two hundred and eighty different kinds," he replied, but number meant little to him. "This new rose is French. Here is a new English variety — has a fine bud, but the head droops when it is full blown."

Andrew was jumping up and down, in the abandonment of joyous excitement.

"It's so lovely now but I must take him up. He will never get to sleep."

"The evening is the finest moment of the day," Tatus protested.

But Mulka gently intervened. "Andzia has everything ready for him, his bath and a little *kasza* and milk. Come and see if it is all as you wish it. His nurse can sleep in the little hall room. Is that alright? I know you don't want anyone to sleep with him." As we were going upstairs, we would see the preparations made as a surprise for us: a new little table and chairs and many new additions to the toy shelf, a large wooden train, molds for the sand, pail and shovel,

and on the shelves of the wardrobe new bibs, in cross-stitched patterns of automobiles, aeroplanes and locomotives, designs for the modern mechanical child.

"Where did you find them?"

"I drew them as best I could, but Andzia embroidered most of them"

"New suits!"

"Yes. These Tatus designed, with a high waistline. I tried to find material that would be cool in this heat."

On Andrew's tray was half a grapefruit

"How in the world did you find that at this late season?" I asked.

"Tatus found them. We knew Andrew liked grapefruit."

"But now there are garden fruits," I protested uselessly. Through the open door into my room I could see Andzia unpacking my bag. She said, "Supper will be served as soon as Madame is ready. Will you change? Mulka had me put this kimono in your room, thinking you might like to wear it."

"I'm not so hot really."

"It is just as the lady finds it convenient."

"It's my hair that is so dirty from the journey!"

"Shall I wash it in the morning?" she asked. "We have an electric drier, and Mulka has found a new handdresser who arranges hair quite presentably."

"If it is sunny I could dry it in the sun in the garden beside Andrew."

"How Madame sits in the sun astonishes all of us."

There was a soft gong downstairs. Andzia said, "That is the supper. I will hear Andrew say his prayers."

"He doesn't know any yet."

"Not the Ave Maria! Well, I will teach him."

"Come up after supper," Andrew called, "to see if I am asleep."

"Yes, sweet. Good night."

Downstairs it was really cool. I regretted not having my jacket, and said so.

"That is impossible," Tatus protested. "The heat is ter-

rific. It is 76 right now, and it must have been more than 80 this afternoon."

"In America —"

"Yes, I could hardly breathe," Mulka gasped at the recollection of her arrival in New York. "I never suffered so much in all my life."

"But Vichy is so hot. Will you go there this year?" I asked.

"Later, perhaps" — Tatus sounded uncertain. "We have applied for visas and money. With money restrictions traveling becomes impossible. You can't take the little trips which make it all worth while."

"Last year we went to Puy de Dome," Mulka said. "Did you see my photographs? This year we wanted to see the Cluniac churches in Bourgogne."

After their cure, every summer for a great many years Mulka and Tatus visited different provinces of France to see the Romanesque churches, which Mulka had carefully photographed. She had been quite a photographer in her youth and had developed and enlarged all her own photographs. Sometimes she used a double-lensed camera with plates to get a three-dimensional picture, but she had quite a collection of cameras and a wonderful collection of pictures of churches and details of carvings.

"What are your plans for the summer?" they both asked together.

"We can't make plans until John finishes his report. Then he should really take a rest. John hasn't had a vacation in three years, not really since we left Geneva. But I doubt he will go away this year. He is very apprehensive about Germany."

"England wouldn't let Germany start a war."

"John says, 'England underestimates Hitler.'"

"Do you really think Hitler amounts to something? Read his speeches. He is crazy. How can you take him seriously? He has no following."

"The danger is that everyone feels as you do."

"Public opinion nowadays —" Father began.

"Is powerless !" I interrupted bitterly.

"Let 's not talk about politics," Mulka said. "It was so hot we thought that you would prefer cold chicken and salad. There are just strawberries for dessert. Do have some more bouillon."

When we were finished, a white oilcloth was put down on the floor and the dogs' bowls brought in. The moment dessert was served, they had waked from a deep oblivion as if by signal and had begun pacing about the dining room table.

"What creatures of habit. They are more regular than men," Tatus remarked. "As soon as they have finished they will stand by the pantry waiting for the tea tray so they can get their sugar. Then they race through the garden for half an hour. Like clock work, at nine they want to go into the front yard. At ten, if we have guests, they are unhappy because they can't go to bed. From ten o'clock on they tease to have their beds brought out."

We went into the dimly lighted library where tea was served. On the table was a pile of wool skeins. "How do you like this wool ?" Mulka asked. "I want to make Andrew a new suit."

"This is no moment for knitting," Tatus protested. "Lay down the new game of solitaire Mrs. Bienacka showed you."

"By the way, how are the ladies on your Committee?" I asked.

"Mother can tell you about them tomorrow. Now lay the solitaire," Tatus insisted.

At a quarter of ten the dogs' beds were brought into the hall, and the maid inquired if anything more was needed.

"It is late, already ten o'clock," said my parents-in-law, "everyone is tired. Good night." Abruptly we all parted for the night.

I was awakened in the morning by the familiar barking of the dogs at the postman. I rang for my breakfast and finding Andrew's room empty, jumped back into bed. Hearing my bell, Tatus opened the door. "You have one letter from

John," he told me, "and one was forwarded, but I do not recognize the handwriting."

"It's from my cousin in America.

"Read them." Tatus asked eagerly "What news do they send you?"

"I'll translate them if you like."

When we had finished the letters, Tatus asked how I had slept, what plans I had for the day, and what dress I intended to wear.

"Is it hot?" I asked.

"There is not a cloud in the sky. The day will be scorching." Tatus's concern for our comfort was touching.

"Then Andzia is washing my hair."

"And — ?" he looked up brightly, hoping I would propose calling on one of Mulka's friends

"Perhaps I shall walk in town to the Lending Library," hoping to deflect his attention.

"What calls do you intend to make?" he could not resist asking. "Mulka has a list of the ladies on whom we think you should call"

"That's for tomorrow. Today I will be lazy, just enjoying being here."

"It's better to get the calls over with. Otherwise every day they will be hanging over you. You need not telephone beforehand nor remain longer than fifteen minutes anywhere, except at Mrs. Rice and Sister Magdalene." He pleaded so sweetly, I melted.

"Alright. I'll promise to do it tomorrow."

"Always tomorrow!" he sighed.

There was a pause, then he said, "Father Michalski is coming in for luncheon tomorrow. Mulka thought you would like to see him. Of course we will have old Stryjenski — Mulka has asked Mrs. Mycielska to come too. That's the only friend he still has, poor old man."

"I am always glad to see them, really."

"Since they would be offended if we didn't have them, we will get it over with at once. Unfortunately, you know, every summer I have to have the members of the Academy. I

would have put it off until after you were gone," he apologized, "but it must be on the fifteenth because of the arrival of the Lwow professors."

"But why? I think it will be extremely interesting."

"About fifty or sixty for supper," he continued. "I have been wondering whether to give them a buffet as usual or to serve them a plate as Mulka saw in America. There is always so much left over after a buffet. We have to eat it up for a week."

Mulka was coming slowly up the stairs. She was returning from Morning Communion, which she never missed, either in the greatest heat of summer or heaviest snow of winter. Then after her breakfast she would hurry to her office at the "Parish Committees." As President she oversaw the finances and decided which new applicants should be given the "dinners." All the other ladies who worked in the office were also volunteers like herself. She had organized fifteen food kitchens, most of them in the refectory of the old monasteries, but some in the parish halls. Most of the food was prepared by the Sisters of Charity and served by ladies of the parish. A hot midday meal of stew, coffee, bread and a pudding was served. Every destitute person was received until a volunteer social worker investigated his case, then, depending on the situation, the applicant was fed temporarily or permanently. Once in a while a swindler tried the round of the fifteen parishes, giving a different name each day. But Mulka used to say, "We are here to feed the poor and we cannot run the risk of turning away the truly needy. The dishonest will surely be discovered quickly enough."

Each kitchen was prepared to feed a thousand daily. To raise the funds for such an enterprise each year there was a house to house campaign, a flower day on the sidewalks of Cracow, theatre benefits and picture exhibitions, raffle sales and church bazaars. Above all, there were gifts in kind; coal offered by coal merchants, loaves of bread given by bakers and flour sent in by friends from the country. Potatoes by the truckload and other vegetables were supplied by the gentry of the Cracow neighborhood.

For nearly twenty years my mother-in-law had given all her strength to the work. As she wearily dragged herself up the stairs, Tatus said, "I wish Mulka would not tire herself so! It is time a younger woman took her place."

"Archbishop Sapieha has promised to look for someone for next year"

"Then promise me you will hand in your resignation now for next year" Turning to me, Tatus explained, "Dr. Oszacki does not like the condition of Mulka's heart. She has to rest now every day for several hours."

Over Mulka's tired face passed a sad look of loneliness. No one in the family had ever been heard to praise her work. Tatus had always complained that it took her thoughts from her family, and her two sons had accused her of pre-occupation. All three begged her to buy herself clothes which she always felt she really did not need, and a car which she flatly refused to have. "A car," she would say, "will cost three thousand dollars to buy. To run it and pay a chauffeur will cost me another thousand a year. With four thousand dollars we can give forty thousand people dinner at ten cents a head. I could never, never ride around in a car for thinking of that. When I am tired I take a *dorozka*, that costs me twenty cents. The street car goes right to the door of my office. Please don't bring up the subject once more." She would beg with so much earnestness that we would all feel ashamed.

"Then I don't think John and I should have a car," I would say.

"That is different. You are young. For you the car is a means of transportation. How rarely you travel in a train!"

"That is hardly giving up something for charity."

"Your time will come. Now get as much happiness as you can together. Let's not talk about it any more," and smiling very sweetly, she would try to change the subject.

Having come in from church she went to her room and lay down in the sunlight on her sofa. The two dogs, jumping up on her feet, left her but little space. During her breakfast she read the paper and listened to the news. She

had a little radio with earphones which she used so as not to disturb Tatus, whose room was directly across the hall. After breakfast her bath was drawn, and Andzia would brush her hair as she had done since Mulka was twelve.

By ten o'clock both parents-in-law had gone out for the morning. Downstairs above the roar of the vacuum cleaner you could hear old Kazia giggling in the garden where Andrew was playing. I felt like a spectator suspended in space, having nothing to do. My first instinct to go to the Library had been the right one — to make a plan of summer reading. Now, at last, I had time to start Duchesne's *Early History*. I hurried out of the house choosing the narrowest and most shady streets. They had been spunkled to lay the dust and cool the air. Before many doorways, pots of oleander were airing, and caged canaries swung in open windows. The strident voices of children playing rang from the backs of the courtyards, and from the different houses came the unmelodious sounds of scales and finger exercises. A man, sitting on a loaded cart, cried out, "I am the hawker of old clothes, rags and papers!" and a woman with a large basket covered with a linen cloth was shouting, "Crayfish! I sell crayfish!" But under the newly planted trees the streets were nearly deserted, and as the hawker's cry died away, a peaceful hum of general activity settled back over the neighborhood.

The Lending Library occupied a narrow vaulted shop in a fifteenth century house. Between the windows heavy buttresses jutted out into the sidewalk. In the heavy thickness of the walls were narrow windows, and set close against the panes new books were on display. The Library listed between ten and fifteen thousand volumes. Half the books were Polish, the rest were French, German, English and Italian. Foreign books were not unusual in Cracow. Even the Lending Library on our street had a good assortment of Penguin and Tauchnitz editions in English, as well as the latest Polish books. But of the many lending libraries in Cracow this was the largest and cheapest, the books costing only a few pennies. As usual the narrow room was over-

crowded. An old lady dressed in black with a heavy black veil (who looked like any other of Mulka's acquaintances) asked me when I had returned. She was rather thin and tall, dressed with nun-like simplicity — intelligent eyes in a kind face. Once again I was conscious of the extraordinary similarity of Cracow society to that of the really old families in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

My book procured, I followed the cool, narrow street out into the brilliant market square, dazzling in the noon sun. Already market stalls were being folded away on carts. Soon the clamorous bustle would be hushed, and no trace would be left of the poultry, the vegetables, the painted wooden furniture, the wicker baskets and the gaily colored children's toys. Swiftly the tables sagging under homespun linens and festooned with laces and the gaily printed skirts billowing in the wind were being piled away. This was the moment to catch a last glimpse of the twelfth century towers of the Panna Maria Church above the sea of striped umbrellas shading the flower market.

In the center of the market square the cloth hall has stood since the fourteenth century. Within the Gothic vaulted hall is a bazaar where peasants buy new velvet bodices embroidered in sequins, coral beads and gay ribbons. About the outside, under an arcade are shops for the city folk, shops of fine scarves and neckties, dress goods and woolens, button shops with a myriad varieties of colors and shapes, a handkerchief shop, and a haberdashery, neatly dusted every morning, a goldsmith who did our small repairs, and the antique shop of Miss Konopka, who was standing in her door. She said in greeting, "How have the Mr. and Mrs. fared during the winter? I have several fine Meissen cups I wish the lady could see."

"We will be back when my husband comes," I replied, hurrying on past my mother-in-law's corsetiere, sewing in her open window. She came to the house for measures and fittings.

"So! The lady just arrived?" she called gaily as I passed.

At the end of the arcade where the Virginia creeper hung

in lacy festoons was a café, set about with pots of oleander and morning-glory. In summer the tables overflowed the arcade out on the market square. But in winter it was less popular. The red velvet benches circling the walls and Gothic columns were hard and narrow, and the great white tiled stove hardly took the chill out of the heavy stone vaults. I chose a table screened from the sun with a quilt of morning-glories and ordered a raspberry syrup. Nearby, the flower women were calling the latecomers, pressing on them their last bunches. Boys were climbing the statue of Mickiewicz, the poet. Through the open doors of the Panna Maria women tugging at their bundles were pushing in and out of the church. Up in the belfry the trumpeter blew the noon bugle. The call, which goes back to the Tartar invasions of the thirteenth century, ends in the middle of the line where the bugler was struck in the throat by a Tartar arrow. On the stroke of twelve, pigeons flew up in the air and when they settled down, as if by magic the market folk had disappeared, leaving no trace that they had been there, no tell-tale boxes, faded flowers nor discarded vegetables. This is the signal for store-keepers to close their shops and pull down their shutters. Last shoppers hasten from the square. The *dorozka* drivers crack their whips, turning their horses to race each other off the square. The noon promenade then commences. Smartly dressed shopkeepers come out of their dark back rooms. Sales girls dressed in the latest Vogue fashions strut up and down the square vying with each other, and young bloods bandy at the street corners.

Fearing that if Tatus had returned before me he would be pacing the hall, watch in hand, though there was still a quarter of an hour before dinner time, I took a taxi. It was well I did. The movement of Mulka's curtains showed someone was watching from the window while Tatus and the dogs were waiting in the hall by the door. "What kept you so long?"

"You were not waiting for me?"

"We were anxious when the noon hour was passed, wonder-

ing what had detained you. Mulka thought you had met Mary or Eva and would forget the time."

"I will tell you all about it," and after embracing him fondly, I ran up the stairs.

CHAPTER 13

ON THE next day Father Michalski was to drive us out of town to a ruined convent on the upper reaches of the Vistula. He was to come at one, and for fear I would be late for lunch, Tatus suggested I make no plans for the morning, but remain at home.

To make the most of the beautiful hot June sun, I put on a bathing suit and taking Duchesne's *Early History of the Church*, retired behind the raspberry bushes at the end of the garden. Though the usual sound of singing from neighboring houses was broken by the periodic roar of aeroplanes practicing spirals, loops and dives, Andrew paddled with unconcern in an old rubber travelling tub from the "good old days." We were lulled by a hot earthy smell that rose about us in delicious soothing waves of heat. If only the morning would go on forever! But at eleven, the old nurse came bustling down the walk, her full black alpaca ruffled about her ankles.

"Let the lady come up now. I will dress her for dinner."

"With two hours' time?"

"Too much sun is no longer considered wise. These fads are changing."

"In a minute then."

A few minutes later, cane in hand, impeccably dressed in a black serge suit and black felt hat, Tatus stepped off the portico into the garden.

"Do come in. You will be late."

"With an hour and a half in which to dress? A minute longer," I begged.

However, the priest professor was already in the library when I came down for dinner, and I could hear my father-in-law apologize for his delinquent family.

"My wife is always with her Committee in the mornings," he was saying as I entered the room.

"*Dzien dobry.*"

"*Dzien dobry*, Father Professor I have taken your advice and begun reading Duchesne"

"A great work!" the priest agreed heartily. "I am, I confess, more interested in the modern problems of philosophy — Bergson and Maritain. One must read modern philosophy to understand what is happening in the world today"

"I thought you were more interested in the Middle Ages."

At fifty the Priest Rector was nearly blind. His thick glasses made his eager eyes look like bright little black buttons. He was small and neat, his soutane brushed to perfection.

"That was my work abroad," Father Michalski explained, "trying to find clues as to the author of an ancient manuscript by comparing the copies in Paris and Oxford. All chance! But my eyes didn't stand the strain. Now I am working on 'modern' theories. Would you care to see my book *God and Fascism*?"

"Yes, please. But tell me, how can you tell who wrote the manuscripts?"

"In the manner of making the letters. You remember the same form in another library. Abbreviations are one of the best ways"

"Are there many unidentified manuscripts?" I asked.

"Most of the manuscripts that have come down from antiquity are unidentified and uncatalogued. We have no idea what was lost in the Spanish conflict. If war comes to Europe soon, three million priceless volumes can be lost of which not only the authors but even the contents and theses are unknown."

"I thought that just as monasteries had preserved the classic learning in the Middle Ages, they kept the libraries in order today."

"It takes very highly skilled and trained men to recognize the period and read the manuscripts today. One is lucky to identify a dozen volumes in one's lifetime while working on the catalogue."

I was dumbfounded. "Where are the uncatalogued manuscripts?"

"In all the great libraries — Paris — Oxford — Cambridge — Seville. The Rockefellers spend enormous sums to send ten men to work in the Vatican. What's done is only a drop in the ocean."

"You can finish your conversation at the table," Tatus broke in. "My wife begs us to go in."

"Does the young man come down for meals?" asked the Father.

"With your permission, Father Professor."

During the meal he told us the history of Tynieć, the Renaissance building we were to see that afternoon

"It will be very hot," Mulka said. "You and Tatus go. I will stay with Andrew."

"Andrew wants to go!"

"You will get tired on such a long ride," I tried to discourage him

"All the same, Andrew wants to go."

"I will take care of him," the priest promised. "The Sisters will give him milk. They have many children on vacation there."

"I cannot understand why the auto has not come," Tatus interposed.

"The dear colleague has the Academy car for the occasion?" the priest asked.

"I always use it for going out of town," Tatus explained. "The driver is careful and a good mechanic."

To hasten the meal Tatus refused a second helping, and he constantly looked at his watch until finally the door bell rang.

"Ah! At last! That will be the chauffeur." To the maid he said, "Tell him to wait outside. We will just finish our coffee."

But as soon as dinner was finished, Tatus sent us up for our wraps, promising we could have coffee when we came down. To the priest he said, "It makes the trip so late if we don't get off right away."

"And does that much matter?" Mulka gently inquired.

When at last he had us in the car Tatus relaxed. Looking at his watch for the last time, he said with his sweet smile, "The Priest Rector knows how women take long to be ready."

We drove along the outer ring, on which all the new buildings of Cracow University were being built. It was a double road, separated by a very wide park strip. The newly planted Lombardy poplars had already reached a stately height. Shrubs and permanent trees planted among them were feathery with young green leaves. As the outer road, freshly laid with asphalt, was barricaded, we were forced to rattle and bump over the old macadam one, deep with pot holes made by the heavy building trucks, and kept muddy by the city sprinkler which was laying the dust.

"How typical of the Polish mentality!" I said. "In America they would let you ride on the asphalt or at least repair the bumps."

"America is so rich," I was told for the nth time. "Cracow could not afford to pave both sides until the buildings are completed."

"Still passenger cars could use the asphalt," I persisted, already ashamed of having used the stupid expression 'typical.'

"There is so little monetary help from Warsaw," Tatus complained, wearily.

"Centralization of everything in Warsaw —" the Priest began.

"Skladkowski was a pupil of mine."

"Have you seen him since he took office?"

"I will make a special point of it the next time I am in Warsaw."

Now we were crossing the Vistula. The smooth planks of the bridge gave temporary relief from the jolting and I could look with pleasure at the play of sun on the old rosy

brick turrets of the Wawel. Children were running about the beaches along the river, and horses, let out of their shafts, had waded in to drink before hauling the heavy loads of sand up to the road on top of the dykes. Across the river rooks were rising from the plane trees. Their croaking call could be heard above the rattle of wooden carts leaving the city.

As soon as we passed the quiet Cracow suburb, the road ran for several miles across the flat moor. Here and there were half deserted wooden shacks. The thick short grass looked newly mowed and every outcropping stone ledge was carpeted with tiny wildflowers and set about with hawthorn and trailing yew. We were crossing that chalk ledge which, geologists said, showed the Baltic Sea had once covered the whole of Poland, even to the Carpathian Mountains. From time to time ancient tracks ran off to unmarked destinations, and our narrow road finally petered out into two ruts. Billowy white clouds floated lazily in the wide sky, and only the noise of our car broke the perfect stillness of the empty space.

"Mr Chauffeur knows the way?" the Priest asked anxiously.

"It is quite clear, Father Professor. Four kilometers ahead is the village where we turn off to Tyniec."

"We could have come up the other side of the Vistula and crossed on the ferry," the Priest explained nervously. "But I have been there when the ferryman was away and it took hours to find him. The Sisters always tell him when they will be returning."

"By boat is the best connection —" the chauffeur began.

"But that runs only once a day," the Priest broke in. "If you do not wish to spend the night at Tyniec, this is the better way."

"I thought Tyniec was only twenty miles from Cracow!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, on the road we are travelling, but most of the year this way is inaccessible. The moor is too boggy," Father Michalski said. "The countryside has not changed since the

thirteenth century when the monks rode this path on horse-back."

The village where we were to turn was hidden in an abrupt hollow of the moor where a creek ran down to the Vistula. The village had many two-storied stone-walled houses built near the newly plastered Baroque church. The church and the houses were buried under ancient plane trees, hanging with mistletoe and dotted all over with countless nests of rooks. Most of the houses were whitewashed log cabins. The new ones had red tiled roofs required by law to protect the village from danger of fire, and the old ones still smothered under immensely deep thatch green with moss and lichen, on which the storks love to build their nest. "Where storks are nesting, a child would be born that year," as anyone could tell you. Here and there were a few cottages painted blue to indicate the owner had a marriageable daughter.

In some of the houses were shops. Above the door was displayed the Polish coat of arms, a white eagle on a red shield saying "Polish Tobacco and Salt Monopoly"—state-owned industries from ancient times. The door would be opened, you could see the wares through the bare window. In all other windows geraniums were blooming, and clean smooth grass grew close to the buildings. After the light air of the moorland, the heavy shade of the gigantic plane trees made the village seem close and humid.

We had come to a separate country, cut off by the moor. The road signs pointed to other villages ; not one sign indicated Cracow. How many of these people had ever travelled so far away as that. A wide dirt road ran from here to Tyniec shaded with willows and weird shaped stumps grown old and hollow. It was busy with carters and carriages, bicyclists and pedestrians. On either side were rich hay fields, and fields of grain, cabbages and potatoes. The ripe produce was shipped down the river to Cracow on steamers that stopped at Tyniec as the barges had done in the fourteenth century. Then all this rich land was under the jurisdiction of the Monastery.

We entered the town over a causeway. The houses had picket fences about them, with phlox growing in the front yards as in all prosperous small towns here. There were sidewalks along the roads leading to the flat grassy banks of the river that served as commons for the village and to the castle.

It rose on a pinnacle of chalk cliff where the river circled around it. Our Fiat could not pull up the bastion. We left it to climb on foot as so many others were doing — boys who rolled down the grassy slope, and women climbing with beads in their fingers. Great buttresses of brick held a high wall above us. There was a gate with portcullis, and heavy oak doors left ajar with a rope to hold them. Inside the court gate was space for a thousand soldiers. To one side of the terrace were the great defense walls, beside them the church and monastery; to the other the ruined Renaissance castle destroyed by the Swedes in 1656. On the fourth side a parapet hung over the river, providing a view of the distant Carpathian Mountains.

Father Michalski knocked at an unpainted oak door that let into part of the walled bastion. Here passages and barracks rooms built for defense, had been reconditioned by the Sisters to house hundreds of orphaned children. The openings had been glassed up to make great windows. In each room stood a porcelain stove. When we arrived the children were outside playing in an orchard of old gnarled apple trees, the trunks clean with whitewash. Several Sisters were preparing the four o'clock bread and milk, setting the enamelled mugs on rough tables covered with oilcloth. Others protected the smaller children from tumbling off the high ruins of the castle on which the older ones were climbing. Trees were growing out of the crevices in the walls and their roots tore the stone sheathing from the brick. Here and there a stone carved lintel was still in place over the immense square windows that now formed an empty arcade on two sides of the tremendous old courtyard.

"Let Jesus Christ be praised, Sister!" said Father Michalski. "I see little results from the money I collected for weeding and tarring the palace ruins."

"I will guide the Father Professor to the repaired places as soon as the honored guests have rested."

"Let the Sisters guard the child Andrew. I prefer immediately to inspect the work that was done."

"Instantly, instantly, Father Professor. The Sister Superior will show it."

Like the Priest Rector, the Sister Superior wore thick glasses. In spite of being near-sighted, she briskly led the way, climbing down the rough path that led around the outside of the palace ruins. First we walked along the wall that towered directly above the village, then above the fields which stretched far off in the golden western sun, where the little mounds of hills grew more and more numerous until they joined the mountains on the horizon. Waves of hot air shimmered before our eyes and the lush deep grass engulfed us with its overpowering scent.

The priest busily compared recent repairs with those made several years ago. "You see here how the cement crumbles off, bringing new bricks with it. Tar is more protecting," he said to the Sister Superior. Though both were nearing sixty, they climbed nimbly to the third story of corridors which were all that remained of the great bishop's place that had once housed several hundred members of his staff. From this height we lingered over the view of the Vistula sweeping around the cliff at our feet.

"What reason had the Swedes to destroy all this?" I asked.

"During the Thirty Years' War, the Protestant Swedes wished to break up the Catholic power of Poland. Tyniec was a formidable fortress holding the Upper Vistula," the Priest answered. Waving his hand he explained the tactics of the battle.

"This view has remained unchanged through the centuries," the Sister commented to me.

"Were the forests not closer?" I asked.

"Not judging by the records. From Roman times these have been grain fields and hay has grown on those meadows."

"Let me show the Father Professor a coin which was brought to me recently. Perhaps he can identify it."

came the sound of a Polonaise played with a flourish on a cheap upright piano.

"Brrrr" shouted a man to his plunging horses. Everyone fled from under foot. The carter reined his horse towards the river bank where the cable ferry was secured to the cliff under the castle. This ferry was a flat-bottomed scow which the ferry-man steered downstream until the force of the current carried it to the other side. The boat was small, just place for the cart. The horse had to cross the river separately. "We could return to Cracow that way," the Priest proposed. "Shall I arrange it with the chauffeur?"

"Oh no!" I begged. "The car might go to the bottom. You need so much power to drive over these logs, the car might jump into the river."

"We could all push it on the ferry," the operator suggested helpfully.

We were standing on the crude log landing. The river was swirling in great eddies of foam, sucking down cones of water ominously. I pulled Andrew away. "This is no place for a child to play." The carter unharnessed the terrified horse and led it to graze on the grass under the trees where several of the village boys tended it. Others who happened to be standing about, helped the carter and the ferry-man push off the barge which slowly drifted out into the current. The ferry swung downstream, the cable strained like a bow, and halfway across the ferry turned to the other shore. They were too far away for us to watch the unloading, and I begged to go home.

"It's only four."

"John might telephone."

The Priest suggested walking further up the river for the view of Tyniec over the meadows. "It would take too long," I pleaded, "Andrew must be home before six."

"This is the most beautiful moment of the day," he said regretfully.

The sky preparing for evening had lost its midday fleecy clouds and had settled into a still deep blue. The swallows awoke, and were flying in great circles over the meadow.

High in the sky larks were singing and the rooks rising and settling in the plane trees were carrying on a soft chitchat. But feeling uneasy and restless I insisted on returning to Cracow. As we drove up to the house, we could see Mulka had been watching for us from her window and she hurried down the stairs to meet us in the hall. "John telephoned. He had an auto accident. He had wanted to make us a surprise and arrive for the weekend."

"He is not hurt?"

"No, but the motor car is badly damaged."

"How did it happen?"

"When he heard you were not here he said he would call after seven when he could explain it to you."

The connection came at eight. John was speaking from our house in Vienna. Someone had unscrewed the wheel of our car. The car had plunged down a high ditch and the bumper had cut through the radiator.

"What a narrow escape!"

"The baggage went out of the window and the dog was hurled over the seat." John's voice sounded very apologetic. "I just hoped to make you a surprise. I was so lonely in Vienna I couldn't stand another moment not seeing you."

"I will take the morning train to Vienna. I will leave Andrew here."

"Yes, do. We simply can't be separated."

"No, no, darling."

"He is not hurt then?" Tatus said.

"God protected him. Everything in its own time," said his mother.

"I am leaving in the morning."

"That is ridiculous if he is not hurt!"

"I will leave Andrew here, but I promised to go in the morning."

"The train leaves at nine. Tickets! Money! One can't leave a country so suddenly!"

"My passport is in order. We can get the ticket at the station. It only costs about fifty zlotys" (ten dollars).

"Yes, yes. I have money enough for you. You mustn't

think of money," Tatus replied with his unfailing sense of protection.

Mulka said, "If you are really going, Andzia should get your bags down. Go tell her what you are taking."

Everything was settled so quickly and then the long waiting began, twelve hours of waiting before the train left! Over and over I kept wondering how it had happened. John had not said over the telephone who had unscrewed the wheel. How foolish of us to be parted! It must never happen again. Marriage wasn't for that. This nightmare was all totally unnecessary. Had I remained in Vienna John would not have had to set off to drive seven hundred and thirty-five kilometers — nearly five hundred miles — across Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland alone. His very existence was so nearly ended!

In the last two years I had fought that horrid premonition that something terrible would happen to us, that vision of John lying dead in a muddy field! I had tried to keep the picture out of my eyes. Though I never thought of it by day, in the early morning it would rouse me with a chill I could shake off only by waking up completely. Then I would creep close to John, and warming myself beside him, put away the spiteful dream as an unworthy and evil fancy.

Now it had nearly come true through, I felt, my fault. I should not have left him. If he needed more freedom for work, my day should be arranged for it. This kind of separation was artificial. It might be good for other people, but not for us. I tossed about all night. In the early morning I was up and dressed and all ready to leave

"Andrzej must be a good boy while I am away."

"Andrzej wants to go!"

"Babby wants Andrzej to stay with her. She would be very sad if we both went away. I am going to take care of Poppy while you take care of Babby."

"*Dobrze*; Andrzej will take care of Babby," he said gaily.

CHAPTER 14

THE trip to Vienna seemed endless. I was tired after the sleepless night, sad at leaving Andrew, and apprehensive about what I would find on arriving in Vienna. Was John telling me the truth? Perhaps he was hurt. But John, as he stood waiting at the Vienna station, looked strong and his usual tower of dependability. "You will never leave me again?" were his first words.

"Not as long as I live." I promised with the whole ardor of my being.

"'Absence makes the heart grow fonder' is such a shabby phrase."

"Absence makes me so deeply miserable that in self protection I have to fill my time with utterly trifling occupations not to think about you."

"We have to be together, every minute, forever."

"Till death do us part," I said, choking back an unutterable emotion.

In the taxi John remarked, "It was the Germans who unscrewed the wheel."

"Are you sure?"

"The car was inspected as usual at the Buick place. I brought it home the evening before to make an early start next morning. It stood downstairs where they had access to it."

The Secretary of Von Papen had moved into our house only a few months before. Our first difficulty with him had been the previous Easter Sunday. That morning we were to leave at five to drive down the Danube to Belgrade. About

3:30, however, we were wakened by someone closing our bedroom door. Jumping out of bed we ran into the boudoir, where our two desks stood. The drawers were half opened and papers were scattered about. There was nothing amiss in the drawing room or in the hall. There was no one on the front stairs. Crossing the dining room we went into the servants' quarters. At that early hour our Viennese cook had already arrived and was boiling the water for our coffee.

"Was there anything unusual when you arrived?" my husband asked. "Did you meet anyone on the stairs?"

The old woman wagged her head. "Nothing, nothing, *Herr Baron.*"

"How many times have I begged you not to call me with a title?"

"As you will, *Herr Gesandtschafter.*"

"Luckily I keep all my papers locked at the Legation," John said when we returned to our room. We decided to dress first and call the two Polish servants only when we were ready to leave.

I was in the tub when John came rushing in to tell me that he had been robbed of the three hundred dollars cash he had in his wallet for our trip. His wallet was still in the drawer of his night table at the head of his bed. It seemed almost inconceivable that an outside thief could have climbed into our window. Calling the three servants, we said one of them must have taken the money, and that we would not call the police if it was returned. The Viennese cook hinted darkly that our house-boy had a liaison and might have been in need of money. On hearing this our two Polish servants were so frightened by this accusation, one could hardly recognize them. Becoming quite hysterical, they ran away, crying, to their rooms. But the cook was unperturbed.

"I have no time for idling now," was her comment as she left our bedroom. "I must prepare the breakfast, *Herr Baron Gesandtschafter.*"

A few moments later the Polish nurse burst into the room bawling more hysterically than before. "My money is gone, gone! All my savings are gone!"

"How much was it Bola?"

"Gone! Gone! Gone!" Though I shook her shoulders, she would not answer but kept repeating, "Gone! Gone! All my savings gone!"

In the meantime John went into Edward's room to ask him if he had lost his money. The lad was prostrate on the bed, unconscious with despair. John could not rouse him. He went to the kitchen to fetch him some coffee. The cook had left.

He telephoned the police, who ordered the main house door locked. He raced downstairs. The concierge was dozing in his box.

"Has my cook left the house?"

"I have not opened the door since it was locked at midnight, *Herr Gesandtschaftsrat*."

"Then the cook did not come in this morning? Keep the door locked till the police come," John ordered. "So that means she spent the night in the house!"

When the police came they found Edward too had been robbed, but even this did not pull him out of his coma of despair. Since we had all been robbed and since the cook had fled, the police concurred that she probably was guilty.

"As she has not left the building, the money is still in the house. It will be simple to recover it," the police said cheerfully and set out to search the house. When they came back they told us the cook could not have entered the cellar which was locked, and must be in the apartment of the German Secretary.

The police requested the right to enter, but the German replied, "Even if the maid were in my apartment, I will not waive my diplomatic immunity and give permission to the police to enter on mere circumstantial evidence. Search the Polish servants upstairs."

After the criminal police took over the case, it was found the cook had once been alone in the house of a Cabinet Minister who had been mysteriously murdered. Her savings account, opened in 1930, had a balance of thirty-five thousand shillings after six years, though her wages were but

forty shillings a month. Still, she could not be convicted on circumstantial evidence. Although the Polish Government requested the Austrian Government to make further investigations, after two months the case was dropped.

After that, when it was known downstairs that we were entertaining guests for dinner, a mournful band would sing the *Horst Wessel* song over and over for hours on end. Sung out of tune, it would end each time on a lower note. When the bottom was reached it would start all over again on a high pitch. Conversation in our apartment was so difficult that it soon became impossible to invite anyone to our house.

And now our car was wrecked.

"Why should the Germans do this to us?"

"I am convinced they believe I am here on a military mission," John replied. "They paid our cook to look through my papers. Her stealing the money spoiled their plans. Now they resort to petty annoyances."

"Smashing the car is hardly 'petty annoyance.' You might have been killed."

"If they didn't believe I was on a secret military mission they wouldn't go to all this trouble," said John brightly.

I leaned back in his arms. It was wonderful he was alive. It was joy to be with him.

During the next two weeks while the car was being rebuilt, John worked night and day finishing his report. Except for an hour every afternoon when we would go across the street to the Theresiana Swimming Pool, he was always at the Legation. He felt certain these trade agreements would make the Danubian countries independent of Germany by opening up a free trade zone among states of more or less the same level of standards of life. All his papers were locked in the safe whenever he left his office. If the Germans got hold of his report before it was put into the form of a treaty, they would undermine the whole proposition by making attractive loans to one country, say Bulgaria, and dangling equally attractive promises to other states on condition they did not join the Agrarian Bloc. As soon

as the report was finally typed, not trusting it to the pouch, we left at once for Warsaw.

Although John had been sent to Vienna by the Foreign Office, the agreements he proposed would have to be carried out by the Department of Commerce and the Ministry of Finance. Unfortunately, because the Polish Minister Mr. Gavronski at Vienna had not foreseen the latest move of Von Papen, he had become generally unpopular in Warsaw. Minister Beck, too, was accused by many persons of influence of having pro-German sympathies. The Minister of Finance Mr. Koc, perhaps for this reason, seemed little inclined to accept a proposition sent him by the Foreign Office. It was ten days before a conference hour was set, and when the conference met, no one with authority was delegated by the Ministry of Finance to attend. It seemed clear John's report was doomed by inter-departmental rivalries. He came back from the meeting discouraged and despairing.

At the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, he found a similar situation. "They had the audacity to ask what commission I got out of it," he told me. "I wish I could retire from all this and go into the University."

"Why don't you?"

"You wouldn't like living in Cracow, and I am too young to settle back in a university. The life would be too pleasant and easy."

"You needn't let it be so. The President of the Bank of Poland was a professor. And Krzyzanowski doesn't lead a quiet comfortable life."

"Do you really mean it?"

"I didn't want to go to Vienna in the first place."

"Put it out of your mind then until I have first seen whether there is an opening in the University."

As soon as it was clear there was nothing more to be done in Warsaw, we left for Cracow. John went at once to the head of the Economics Department, Professor Krzyzanowski, under whom he had worked for his doctorate. Krzyzanowski was a short stocky man, with a deceptively lazy southern

drawl. He had negotiated more foreign loans than any other person in Poland. We had last seen him in the Hotel Plaza in New York, looking out of place and uncomfortable. He had apologized for all these unwanted luxuries, saying, "I couldn't float a loan unless I lived here." Now he greeted John with more than usual enthusiasm. "It's about time you joined us. I have been wondering how much longer you would stand the diplomatic racket!"

John explained the urgency of the work he had done in Vienna.

"Someone else, however, will draw up the treaties!" the Professor spoke with bitterness.

"The report is in the legal division now," John said.

"Now that is accomplished, what future do they offer you?"

"Commercial and Financial Secretary in Vienna."

"Routine business," the Professor said with disgust. "I will place your name on the list of candidates for Assistant Professor. You must prepare an address on the subject of your thesis for the faculty, who will ask you questions. Later they ballot on the candidates; in your case this will be a formality. We will need good young heads to carry on the University when war comes." Krzyzanowski then asked him in which field of economics he wished to lecture

"On the effects of state monetary control laws, on general economic factors," John said.

"No one is more fitted to do it. You have had access to all the most recent exchange regulations and you know all European languages. Do you read Portuguese, as well as Spanish?" the Professor asked.

"I worked with them in Geneva. Recently I have been studying Rumanian, Bulgarian and Yugoslavian. Hungarian is the only language I absolutely can't read."

"We will all come to listen. Now prepare your lecture. I will do the rest."

Instead of going on a vacation, we settled down in Cracow, for two months, while John prepared the lecture he must give to the Faculty of the University.

We had arrived in Cracow at the very moment when Tatus

as President of the Academy of Science was preparing his annual reception of the sixty professors. The house was in great tumult. For a week beforehand Tatus had been pruning the garden to produce the maximum blooms for that day. Mulka had been allowed to spend only half her time at her Committee, in order to be on hand for all little changes in details. The telephone rang constantly. One professor would beg to be allowed to offer some wine. Another had raised melons under glass which were just turning ripe. Professor Nowak wished to send trout from his fish hatcheries. Amid these kind offers, others telephoned their acceptance. Until after the reception Tatus could only be approached with notepaper in hand and every consideration other than the reception was put off. Then, Monday morning, the bombshell fell. The President of Poland, Ignace Moscicki, as Professor of Chemistry, telegraphed that he planned to come to Cracow for the opening of the Academy of Science and would be pleased to come for dinner.

The President could not be expected to stand about in a reception of professors at a buffet supper. Tatus' strict sense of propriety dismissed this notion immediately. During the hottest noon days we measured the garden with a view to serving dinner on little tables out on the lawn.

"What if it should rain at the last moment?" said John.

"How would you ever decide who was to have the honor of sitting with the President?" I asked.

"What kind of a meal could you possibly serve out of doors, and where could we find enough servants to serve it?" Mulka demanded.

Tatus groaned. "There is nothing for it but to have the President on Wednesday, and the rest of the Academy on Thursday."

"That night there will be a reception by the President at the Wawel."

"If he would come Wednesday," he repeated, "it would simplify everything. We could invite just the Local Committee, the Archbishop and the Mayor of the city." Tatus held his head in despair. "How I hate these last moment re-

arrangements, after I have been preparing this for a month."

John offered to telephone the President.

"Operator, I wish to speak to the President of Poland."

"Do you want Warsaw?"

"You will have to find out where the President is now staying."

During luncheon there was silence. If anyone started to speak, Tatus would motion them to be silent. "Don't ask me that now. Some other time," he would say plaintively.

When the telephone bell rang, he raced to the phone, though John was to do the speaking.

"Hello —"

"Tak."

John gave the invitation. The Secretary promised to telegraph whether the President could come as conveniently a day earlier.

All afternoon we waited in a state of suspense. Nothing could be settled before the arrival of the President's telegram. The two maids, Kazia and Bronia, sat about the dining room table giggling while they polished the silver, and in the kitchen Halka baked little cakes and made pastry shells. Old Andzia ran up and down stairs with linens, counting out the six dozen napkins.

"All this rush and bustle about the house! Andzia, why do you keep running up and down stairs?" Tatus exclaimed.

"I've finished. Only once more," she protested, going on about her work.

Mulka took Tatus' hand. "*Kazia Koteczku*," she said softly, "are you not going to the club? It's four o'clock."

"Not this afternoon."

"There is nothing you can do by staying at home."

"I must be here when the telegram arrives."

"You might wait for hours. I can reach you at the club or at the Institute."

Taking a book, Tatus went up to his room and closed his door. At last at five o'clock the telegram arrived. "Mr. President would gladly come on Wednesday."

Tatus seized the telephone. "Now, my dear, come help

me with the telephoning. Dial the numbers while I think."

"Dear Mr. Colleague, such changes! The President is coming Wednesday. Can you alter your plans? There will be just eighteen for dinner."

"Dear Mr. Colleague — such changes! —"

Through the wall in the next room where I was feeding Andrew I could hear the tired voice.

"Dear Mr. Colleague — Wednesday — just eighteen —"

When it was learned in town that the President was coming, the book dealer Fisher sent Napoleonic Tokay; the oldest wine merchant Gross offered two priceless bottles of hundred year old Mead.

During the dinner for the President, Mulka and I ate off trays upstairs. Two ladies would have complicated the already difficult seating. Archbishop Sapieha sat opposite the President at the middle of the table, John and Tatus at the ends. No one could say who took precedence and which was the most honored position.

After dinner was over and the coffee and liqueurs were finished, we came down to help with the conversation. As we entered, the gentlemen were all seated stiffly about the long green table in the library. The President and the Archbishop sat in state at either end of the room, and Tatus was busy bringing up the different members of the Academy for a few words. Only the Mayor of Cracow was holding a rapid conversation at the long table.

"A very fine garden you have," the President said. "Please, Ma'am, let me compliment you. Your daughter-in-law is American. I speak a little English too." Mulka and I were seated and each professor in turn sat for a few moments beside us.

At ten-thirty, both the President and the Archbishop stiffly took leave, and with them, the cordon of police who had roped off our street. After they had gone a storm of conversation broke loose. Everyone spoke at once, each praising the honored guests for their wit and naturalness. Each repeated the conversation he had had.

"The President is so easy!"

"It is such a pleasure to talk to the President!"

"Did he tell you anything new?"

"I told him we should open a strip to the Russians across the Carpathian Mountains to Czechoslovakia."

"Once Russians enter Poland they will never leave it!"

"How else can they bring help to the Czechs?"

"The problem is to defeat Germany. We can deal with the Russians later."

"The Czechs will surely fight."

"The Czechs will not cede their territory to Germany."

"There is labor trouble in Germany — sabotage."

"Hitler has cancer of the throat. He will die in a few months."

"If war comes it will prove internal difficulties are so great that Hitler has to solve them by war."

"All that sounds like British talk. That is what they hope. They count on internal revolt. They never have understood the Germans' stubborn loyalty. Besides Hitler is popular."

"Hitler won't stop until he reaches Russia."

"The quality of Polish and Czech equipment is better than Russia's."

"What if Russia joins with Germany?"

"It would be unsafe to give Russia passage across Poland. The Russians are as imperialistic as the Germans. Once in Poland they would never leave voluntarily."

"Don't forget Russia will join with Germany."

I could only hear snatches of the conversation. One or another of the professors would ask me what America thought of Hitler. I could only repeat that I knew America would not help Poland, perhaps even Europe, until it was too late.

At eleven-thirty most of the professors pulled out their watches as if by a signal and, standing stiffly, waited in turn to bow over the outstretched hand of my mother-in-law.

The Mayor was the last to leave. Taking my father-in-law by the arm, he walked back and forth in the drawing room, talking in a low voice. They were discussing some matter before the City Council. While the Mayor repeated

his argument again, Tatus maneuvered him into the front hall.

"Yes, indeed, Mr. Mayor. As I said — " you could hear him repeat. At last the front door slammed shut, and Tatus walked rapidly into the room more gay and energetic than if we had spent a quiet evening at home.

"Finished! I will be still happier when tomorrow evening is over. Now to bed! No more talking! Conserve your energies." He called the maids, and as I climbed the stairs I heard him say, "You all did very well — and Kazia too. She didn't giggle once, I noticed." Then he barricaded the stairs and went up to his room. He would sleep little for thinking of the sixty members of the Academy who were coming the next evening.

CHAPTER 15

JOHN finished the work on his dissertation just ten days before he was to deliver it to the Faculty of the University of Cracow. That did not leave much time to go back to Vienna and pack up our belongings. Yet John, who was always ready to spend fifteen hours at the wheel, wanted to see whether the new strategic highway to Vienna via Munich, of which so much had been written, was completed (and what warlike preparations were being made in the Sudetenland).

For this reason, on the return journey to Cracow, we crossed the Czech-German frontier several times between Pilsen and Breslau. The contrast between the two countries can hardly be imagined. On the German roads we were held up by army lorries, trucking the harvest of potatoes, beets and cabbages. On the Czech side you could drive over the usual empty highroads and cross peaceful villages for miles on end without stopping. Every German hamlet was choked with heavy trucks, and untrained drivers blocked the central market squares, delaying us for hours so that we reached the Polish frontier a day later than we had intended. The heavy trucks pretended to be privately owned. Peasant names were painted on their sides. It was difficult, however, to believe that these uniformly large six-wheeled vehicles were the private property of poor farmers. In the quiet Czech villages the German shopkeepers had put up their signs in German. Across the German border, no Czech nor Pole living in the German Bohemian towns would have dreamed of such a privilege.

To add to our difficulties, a violent Autumn storm had turned the roads to quagmire and strewn them with leaves and branches. When we finally reached the Polish frontier, the customs officer was occupied in guarding a group of several hundred farm workers returning to Poland without passports. He was not able to attend to us until the Polish constable could be roused from the nearest county seat. "Every year," he said, "it was the same story. In the spring Germans go from village to village promising high wages for farm labor. They smuggled peasants out over the frontier. Once illegally in Germany, these workers have no redress from German Courts and having worked the whole season, are thrown out of the country without any pay."

"I should think that the peasants would not go back a second year."

"Naturally," he said, "the Germans must choose a different community each spring. Though our Ministry of Labor sends out warnings to every part of the country, the Germans trick several thousands of persons every year."

At 2 o'clock he was still guarding the peasants so we went into a German inn for lunch. It was raining heavily when we returned to the car. We found all four tires flat on their rims with thick iron spikes driven into them. Even our spares had been punctured. It was hard to imagine how we could have picked up on the road four identical spikes and certainly the spikes in the two spares had been driven in by hand. The German police insisted they had seen no one near the car and took no interest in the affair.

We begged the Polish frontier guard to let us go in search of the village mechanic who lived on the Polish side of town. Our clothes were thoroughly rain-soaked by the time we found his deserted shop. None of the passersby we hailed in the street knew where the mechanic had gone, but one of them volunteered to start the forges going, others offered to return with us to help block up the car and remove the wheels. While we rolled the wheels in procession across the town, strangers called out, "We haven't seen the mechanic, but we'll find him presently."

The rain changed into a drizzle during the afternoon, leaving the village roadway slimy with mud. While running about the car I tripped and skinned my leg on the rough cobble pavement.

"In this dirt, you could get tetanus," John said with dismay, "it's at least two miles back to the inn."

Someone from a nearby shop ran out with water in a dirty basin. John was so frightened I would touch it that he shouted, "Let it bleed. You can clean it with face cream and toilet water, and tear up one of my clean shirts to make a bandage."

As the car was still jacked up, I had to squat on the sidewalk to bandage my leg.

At the forge, every time a man passed, John called, "For a few grosze do give us a hand here," until it seemed that half the town was mending our six tires. Some pumped up the tubes to test them in water, others worked the bellows, and others held the vulcanizing irons to the tires. By four o'clock all six tubes and tires were ready, though the mechanic had only arrived in time for a final check-up. John put his hand in his pocket wishing to reward the men, and found he had only American dollars.

"How much Polish money have you?" he asked me.

"Five zlotys," I said. (\$1.00)

"And I need fifty!"

The poor village mechanic had never seen an express check. As the bank was closed, he suggested, "Try the police. They may know what to do with it." But the police said, "Go to the Jew. If he will, he can change the money but you must hurry! If he has lighted his candles, he will not make the exchange."

In the street we asked, "Where does the Jew live, Abraham the Jew?" Boys ran after us to direct us to the street and ran with us to the second floor of the house where he lived.

"No, I can't do it. It's too late. Darkness has set in."

"Mr. Banker," John pleaded with him, "it is only the dark clouds. The first stormy day of winter!"

"I cannot do it. It would be against my principles. But I

tell you what I will do for you, Mr. Inheritor. I will lend you the money and you can bring me the check tomorrow."

"Don't you understand?" John almost cried. "I must spend the night in Warsaw."

"Warsaw is too far, too far! That is impossible, Mr. Inheritor. We will do the whole business in the morning."

"I shall put the check for ten dollars in this envelope," John said, signing it. "And I shall seal it so you cannot open it until tomorrow. Now you lend me nine dollars," he continued desperately.

The Jew stood up in his long black frock. His noble head was covered by a round cap, and his white curls hung down to his shoulders. He left us and went into the next room to wrestle with his principles. When he returned, he said, "Only for the good gentleman do I make this exception."

It was five when finally we were ready to leave the frontier, with three hundred miles to cover during the night. After the heavy rains the roads were in very bad condition. Our headlights hardly picked them out at all. We had scarcely driven ten miles when I asked, "Don't you think we are driving on our dimmers?"

"If our headlights burned out, where could we fix them?"

"Are we far from Piotkow?"

"Fifty miles."

"Isn't it more reasonable to spend the night there?"

"Then tomorrow will be wasted. I have little enough time to go over my lecture." John sounded as if he were at the end of his rope.

"And if we went now to Cracow?"

"We would arrive after midnight and frighten the family out of their wits."

I was silent. As the lights grew dimmer and dimmer it was apparent our battery was running down.

"Just you watch the edge of the road. I will go on the parking lights for a while to let the battery charge a bit."

It was so dark that even the villages through which we were passing were invisible. From time to time the moon would break through the rushing clouds, and village duck

ponds would mirror back the light. But in the endless forests white fog would blow across the road, carrying the dank autumn smell of forest undergrowth, blacking out all landmarks. At great intervals a bus would dash past us with blinding lights, or we would just escape crushing a carter asleep on his wagon, his rear lantern out. By two o'clock we caught up with an endless string of covered wagons carrying produce into town.

"We must be nearing Grodzisk."

"In an hour and a half we should be home," John said happily.

Hardly had he spoken when he noticed that the long caravan was turning to the left, and that the high road was heavily barricaded.

"Detour to Sochaczew," I read on a placard.

"What has happened?" John voiced our dismay.

"Heaven knows! Won't this double the distance home over narrow back roads? Why couldn't we have stayed en route for the night?" I wailed. "Can nothing ever make you change your plans!"

"Put your head down and go to sleep. I'll wake you when we are home."

"But the lights?"

"The battery will be charged by now."

"You are even more tired than I."

"Sh — sh —, Sleep — sleep."

The car jolted slowly, heavily, over the dark badly paved roads. I slumped against the seat but could not fall asleep. Every village street was torn up, and sewage pipes were lying by the road. "Oh, these terrible roads, why don't they pave them?"

"Evidently they don't want to pave till new pipes are laid."

"The moon seems to be higher. There is more light."

"That's the sun coming up."

The wagons, now darker than the road, were faintly visible. Far off we could see six lights high in the sky — Raszyn, the radio station outside Warsaw.

"That must have been Guzow," John said, as we pulled

up on the main Poznan highroad. "Now we have only twenty miles."

The car purred over the smooth pavement in soft release. Though there was a double line of heavy wagons, the great, broad Napoleonic road was visible for miles ahead. Soon we had reached the Airport and the end of the street-car line. Apartments standing desultorily in almost empty fields grew more and more numerous, closer and closer together, until they lined the city streets. We both relaxed. Nothing more could happen to us. If the car broke down now we could reach our home anyway. But like a tired horse on the home stretch, the car fairly raced through the empty streets.

"Remember how bumpy this street used to be when the street-car track criss-crossed it a dozen times?"

"Now the tracks are set in grass and trees. This horrid old street looks actually handsome. How a well paved street looks prosperous at once!"

Along the sidewalks, beds of yellow chrysanthemums still held their color, though the young trees were bare. A warm wave of home-coming flooded over me. Warsaw! Driving over this very street ten years before, wolves had seemed to be prowling behind broken walls and rotting doors. How was it possible the character of a street could be changed in such a short space of time?

When we reached the center of the city, trams were bringing night workers to their homes — the never ending line of cars of the *Kiakowskie Przedmiescie* that Uncle Anthony loved to watch. It was just five o'clock when we arrived before our house. The speedometer showed John had driven 360 miles in the twelve hours. We opened the latch and there everything was in place, as we had left it two years before. Every rug and every chair had been meticulously put back, and in our room the bed had been turned down, and I saw the fine linen sheets from Strassbourg, and all the piles of pillows of different sizes, smoothly pressed — the luxury of the warm white room; the hot steaming bath in the yellow and grey tiled bathroom! Neither in Vienna nor in Geneva had we had so much comfort.

"What are you doing? Why don't you come to bed?" I called. John, in his study, was sitting on the floor and filing away his new books. The rest of the night he rearranged his library of five thousand volumes. The French histories had belonged to his grandfather and the English classics were mine but the bulk of his collection were economic studies which he had collected in every language during the past ten years. The next morning without resting he flew down to Cracow to deliver his lecture.

After two years away it was hard to fit in all our friends, so that one did not have to explain how a week had gone by without seeing them. Yet during the first fortnight after our return to Warsaw, breakfast was the only meal we had to ourselves. Gone were those blissful days when we had drifted about alone together. We met at luncheon parties, arriving separately, and parted afterwards, rushing off in different directions. When John was home he sat behind a bolted door to work. Half the night he worked preparing his lectures after I had gone to sleep. Even Andrew was not allowed to disturb him long enough to say good night. He would return so late, I nearly always had to telephone that we would not arrive on time for dinner.

At our parties I often had to make the seating list out alone, or check it with the Government protocol. John would arrive after the last guests. If at the last moment someone was unable to come, I had to decide upon the substitute. This was not simple, for if "diplomats" were invited, then few of our Polish friends would care to come.

Since Government circles were inaccessible to most foreign journalists and Secretaries of Legation in Warsaw, the Opposition accused the Government of every possible crime, every internal and international intrigue. There were some Poles who honestly believed that Beck was hand in glove with the Nazis, in connivance with Germany itself. The Opposition, as everywhere else, did not see that the cure for a bad government program is not more opposition, but more constructive criticism. In the emergency they were unwilling to work with their Government, instead they stooped to

personal abuse and bitter feuds which widened the gulf between the Government and the Opposition and caused the Government circle to grow closer and tighter. They refused to see that the alternative to co-operation was chaos ; that Hitler was only waiting for the opportunity afforded by the inevitable disorganization attending change in government. We were only just faintly grasping these things, and we had not yet learned how to formulate them. Moreover, it was clear the intellectuals were not prepared to work together. Though we did not always agree with Mr Beck, he represented the Government, and like the great masses of the Polish people, we believed he should be supported during his term of office. Naturally some of the Cabinet Ministers realized clearly what was going on, others, as in every other country, merely jockeyed to keep their high positions. It was against these that the Opposition launched their most successful attack.

After the October rains the sun shone brightly for the last few days of autumn before the heavy fog bank shut off the winter sky. We were having eighteen for luncheon, and an autumn menu : Baked mountain mushrooms, guinea hens with wattleberry sauce, and for dessert, Royal Riviera pears weighing over a pound apiece, grown by Tatus in his garden, stuffed with almond paste and stewed. I had had to choose the wines and change the menu. Before I had finished the bell rang and the first guests began to arrive. When John appeared, he whispered in my ear, "Victor, Makowska's nephew, is opening the front door dead drunk !"

"Tell him to go away," I whispered back. "I never did like his hanging around our house anyway. Edward can manage both doors."

"Victor has lived on our charity long enough, I'll tell him to leave at once," John exploded. When after a few moments he returned, he was pale with anger. But lunch was served before I could find out what had happened. As we entered the dining room he looked with surprise at the rearranged seating, and glancing at the wine, whispered to Edward, the house-boy, to change the Montrachet which I

ordered. I supposed he thought it too heavy for the Montrose that was to follow. The two men to my left and right were talking heatedly across the table, and for the instant my thoughts wandered off to the good uncorked wine which would mildew, and I thought, "I will have to invite the Bishop and Uncle Anthony's family Friday. They will enjoy Mont-rachet with a pike." John was looking at me. "Yes, I will pay more attention to our guests," my eyes said back to him. "Mr Minister has had a good vacation?" was an easy way to begin.

The moment the guests were gone we called Makowska.

"How was the dinner? I know the lady will say the parmesan cheese was too mild."

"It's about your nephew — about Victor. He opened the front door, drunk."

"The lady knows my husband is away by day working on the Zamek." I found Makowska's voice had an unexpected peevishness.

"Makowska knows I am not criticizing her, but her nephew. I want him to leave our house immediately."

"Leave our house! His mother — a poor widow!" Makowska wailed.

"When your husband is away Edward can open the door. There is no question of Victor's staying here. He must go at once."

"He has been so useful and helpful," Makowska begged.

"He has to leave this house within two hours or I will call the police to arrest him for disorderly conduct," John said angrily.

When Edward came in to clear away the coffee cups and liqueur glasses, he said, "There is a fortune to be had from the rag man for the wodka bottles in the cellar."

"I shall see he surely leaves," John promised confidently, but half an hour later he returned and telephoned his lawyer. "Brem says we can call the police. Victor has passed out, and the others say he has brought girls into the house."

Makowska was not in the kitchen, where I went to ques-

tion her, but in a heap on her bed. It was the first time I had ever seen her weeping with uncontrollable sobs.

"Gracious Makowska, he's only your nephew. Send him away and all will be forgiven." Makowska did not answer.

Of his own accord, Victor left during the afternoon, and we tried to forget the whole incident. On the next day we received a letter from the State Attorney saying that since Victor had worked for us as janitor of "so and so many rooms" without contract or pay, we were due to pay a fine of a year's board wages and a year's sick and unemployment insurance at six dollars a month. We sent this astonishing document to our lawyer, who promised to attend to it. About a week later, however, we received a summons to appear at Court, the day being the one on which John's weekly lecture in Cracow was scheduled.

"I can go to Court," I said confidently. "It's surely simple to prove he came here while we were away in Vienna. We never hired the boy. He annexed himself to us, the whole story is preposterous!"

Our lawyer, however, advised settling with Victor "If you lost," (and we were fighting the State) "you would have all the Court fees to pay in addition."

"I would rather go to Court. I am sure we can't lose."

The date of the trial was Tuesday, November 9th, 1937. On Monday I had little time to talk it over with John before he left for Cracow. I had had a busy morning and we had had two Cabinet Ministers for luncheon. In the afternoon the Ministers stayed till four, discussing points in the Danube report.

When they were gone, John said, "It's the last chance to plant the bulbs. It might freeze any time now."

"It's growing dark," I protested.

"We'll all do it together — and Andrew too. Andrew can make the holes for Poppy to plant bulbs," he said gaily.

There were two hundred narcissus bulbs and a hundred tulips, as well as scyllas, snowdrops and some daffodils to be grouped about the garden. It was drizzling faintly. The

first cold icy fog had set in. John's face was streaked with mud, and his hair was dripping in the rain. "Leave the rest, let's stop," I had begged over and over again. "I will plant them tomorrow."

"You know you won't! Besides, I need the exercise."

"Please come in. It's so cold!"

"Go in and order the tea. I'll be finished shortly." His gentle voice had a low thrilling tumbre.

"My back aches, and yours must too," I weakly protested.

"If you won't go in, then get a lantern and hold it for me." I held it for him for the last hour while he worked.

When we came in, my Polish teacher, Miss "Book," was sitting by the fire.

"What has happened?" she cried in consternation, taken aback by our muddy hands and dishevelled appearance.

"Nothing. Bulb planting! We will have tea presently."

"Mr. John is having tea with us!" she exclaimed. "That is an unexpected pleasure."

There was a tremendous noise in the hall, and John came in roaring like a lion, with Andrew on his back. "Andrew is going to have tea with us too."

"Mr. John, it is such an honor to have tea with you. I hope I am not intruding."

"Far from it! When I hear my wife speak Polish, I always thank you!"

"There is still much to be done with her spelling —"

"You will always help her?"

"Always, always, I promise it!" she said with emotion.

In a businesslike way, John finished two cups of tea and a plate of bread and butter, went to his study and came back with a waste basket.

"What in the world have you got there?"

"A surprise! Miss Book, please keep my wife occupied till I say 'look.'"

"Andrew wants to help."

"No, Andrew would tell Mummy. It's a surprise. You go sit on Miss Book's lap. She will tell you a lovely story."

She began, "Once upon a time —"



Andrew
at four
months



Andrew
at three
years



Above Our house in Warsaw

Below The house in Cracow



On the piano John had spread out some maps he had picked up for a penny, and was measuring them around the waste basket. He had put glue to melt in a little white enamel cup in the embers of the fireplace.

I stretched out on the sofa before the fire, thinking again how tenuous my happiness was — the frail thread of John's life so precious that everything, even this room, seemed alien by comparison. Those lovely silks hanging on the wall, which he had found for nothing in discarded dust piles, one could see how fine they were only when they were washed and pressed and mounted. These pictures whose artistic value he had by some instinct recognized! These chairs and rugs, he had found them all, but never felt he owned them. When he would bring home a piece of china, or a snuff box or a clock, he would say, "When the war comes, we will live by selling this!" Oh, Fate that showed me this peace and joy, let me taste this bliss a little longer!

John was bent intently over his work. How thin the hair on his poor bald head had gone, the half moon of hair that grew down on his neck and curled at the edges, the clean white collar, always spotless. How thin he had grown that summer! His coat hung off his shoulders.

"You must call the tailor, dear, to have him take in your jacket." Silence. "It's simply hanging off you."

Andrew was sitting spellbound on Miss "Book's" lap.

John turned suddenly around and said in Polish, "No matter what happens, my wife will always say she felt it coming."

Miss "Book" looked up and smiled absently, going on with her story.

"What do you mean, dear?" I felt pained.

"Your basket's ready. How do you like it?" he replied cryptically.

"It's lovely! The old white is just a perfect match for my room, and those baroque scrolls you painted relieve the plainness. Let me take it in and see how it looks." How quickly he had waved that cloud away.

I put the basket by my toilet table which he had designed

to use my mother's duchess lace. When I came back he had made a second basket in brown for his own room.

"Andrew's bed time ! Thank you, Miss "Book." We will see you soon again ? I shall have plenty of time tomorrow while Mr. John is in Cracow."

While we were dressing for dinner, John said, "I don't want you to leave the party at the Winslow's this evening. I'll just slip out, come home and change. You stay till the party breaks up !"

"How can you ask me to stay ? Of course I will leave with you. I could help you pack."

"I won't take anything but my papers."

"Things for the train ?"

"They will go in my briefcase. I will be back tomorrow as usual."

"On the train that gets in at midnight ?"

"That gives me time for both lectures. If I take the three o'clock train I have to rush."

"I hate to have you go."

"I hate to do it. But don't be silly, it's only for one day."

"I shall miss you frightfully — every minute. Oh, be careful !"

"There's no more danger in going to Cracow than there is in going downtown."

"I know that," I said sadly.

"I could wait over and take the 9 A.M. plane."

"No, that's worse. You promised never to go by plane alone, remember ?"

"I remember."

"You know winter is a bad time to fly. Remember what Raczynski said about flying after he married."

"Let's not go over all that. I only asked you."

"The dark cloud ?"

"I never feel it when I'm with you."

Edward knocked at our door. "Evening mail," he said.

"A letter from that Lwow professor. I think I told you, there is an opening there for next year for full professor. How would you like moving to Lwow ?"

"I'd love it."

"You don't know anyone there."

"If you liked your work I'd love it," I repeated.

At ten thirty, when John stood up to take leave of our host, I got up also.

"You stay. You said you would," he whispered.

"I have to go too," I insisted aloud.

"I'll take you home," someone said.

"Stay on," everyone begged jovially.

I felt trapped. Clutching at John's arm, I pleaded, "Don't make me stay, please."

"My wife is tired. This first month in Warsaw has taxed her strength."

I leaned against him, happy and relaxed. Alone in all the world he could understand perfectly.

We ran home gaily.

"While you are packing I will undress. You can kiss me good night in bed, and I will try to go to sleep at once."

"Darling!"

John was running in and out of the room, putting books and papers in his bag. By the time he snapped it closed I was in bed.

He knelt down by the bed. "Good night," he said, and made the sign of the cross on my forehead. "Sweet dreams."

"I love you."

"Forever."

"Forever"

I burrowed my head in his neck where I could feel the familiar knot in his throat against my eyes.

"Stop crying. Nothing will happen. You know I have to do this every week, and if you are going to make a tragedy over it I shall have to give it up."

"Forgive me."

"Yes. Well — good night."

"Don't go."

"I'll miss my train. Good-bye." Without turning he fled out of the room, down the hall, slammed the doors. I ran to the window to see if there was a taxi at our corner. The

falling mists had coated the sidewalk with crinkly ice. I tried to beat back the tears, the tightness in my throat.

"I'm so foolish," I thought. "When John goes out every day I think nothing of it. There is no difference. If only one were as alert to be tender when he was at home as when he was leaving it. I must try and be less impatient when he is late — and less possessive."

The bed stood in a recess formed by book shelves — on one side histories, on the other current books. I pulled out Thiery's "*Tableau de l'Histoire Romaine*" and found my place. John would be arriving at the station. I could see him running through the temporary building, his coat flying, and down to the new tunnel two flights below the street.

CHAPTER 16

*T*HE next morning, a half hour ahead of time, I arrived at the Court with our administrator. The Labor Courts had set up their jurisdiction in what had been the Jewish section. They had taken over an old apartment house without making over the building. Having found out in which apartment our trial would be heard, we picked our way through the crowded, muddy courtyard and climbed up a wooden back staircase. We had to push our way up among a crowd of loitering workmen. On the fourth floor the schedule for our trial was posted by a front door. We shoved our way into the inner hall. The smaller rooms were occupied by stenographers. Two main rooms had been thrown together, and here the Court was already in session. A list of the cases hung on the bulletin board.

"Our trial is next," the administrator said. "I will look for the lawyer. Does Madame intend going on the witness stand?"

"You, Mr. Administrator, should know how long Victor has lived in our house with Makowska. You know we never gave him permission to remain. But if their lawyer needs me, I will stand."

While we were looking for him, the lawyer saw us. "I advise you to settle, Madame," he told me immediately. "The State proctor is giving all the verdicts to the workers."

"Legally, how do we stand?" I inquired.

"These days when workers get free State attorneys —" he began.

"Do you mean to say any person you rescue in charity from the street can claim to be a hired servant?" I exploded.

"The law says — if you accept their services — they are entitled to compensation," the lawyer patiently explained.

We were called. At the back of the Courtroom others waiting trial filled all the benches. Those whose case was being heard came up to the Judge and sat before him. Our case was read by the lawyer. The State Attorney claimed that we had taken advantage of a country lad to exploit him without payment of regular wages. He had had to work for us for nothing, only for tips as a doorman! Our lawyer protested that Victor was the nephew of our doorman, and showed as proof the signed contract with Makowska. "Why was he allowed to stay and take tips?" the Judge asked pertinently. "That proved you used his services. Doubtless the boy was too ignorant to know how to make a contract. The State must protect such ignorant workers, and must fine you on the basis of the equitable contract you had failed to make."

"But Mr. Judge, he was a drunkard, and refused to leave our house. He was there as a visitor."

"Drinking? Well, he shall be fined for drinking while on duty. Your fine, then, will be eight hundred zlotys."

I was stunned. "We will appeal," I said to the lawyer. "Makowska can testify for us."

"You cannot leave Court without paying the Court fees," the lawyer reminded me.

"I haven't the money."

"I thought of that contingency. I will pay it."

"It is utterly preposterously unfair!" I was bewildered and furious.

It was two o'clock when I returned home. The telephone bell was ringing as I opened the front door.

"Hello." John's deep throaty voice. "Now, please don't worry. I am bringing Mulka back with me by tomorrow's plane. You will release me of my promise?"

"Yes, if you ask it."

"Don't be silly! Good-bye."

"John, John — the Court ruled against us."

"Oh, yes, the trial. You can tell me about it tomorrow. I must rush for my class now. Good-bye."

The telephone clicked. So that was it! Tomorrow. Today, all this afternoon, and tonight and tomorrow, I must wait.

"Madame will come in to luncheon?"

"Oh, luncheon. Yes, in a moment."

I telephoned my brother-in-law. "Hello, Michael?"

"Yes."

"John is bringing Mulka by plane tomorrow."

"I wonder if anything is wrong. Mulka was to see the doctor or something. Well —"

"Stop in on your way upstairs tonight."

"I'll try to remember. I'll be late, though."

The next morning, the 11th of November, the bells were ringing. The two maids came in to ask what time they could go to church.

"I will just have a light luncheon. Dinner this evening, when the elder lady and the Master will be here."

"Madame does not fear this foggy weather, for flying?"

I tried not to think about it.

On his way out to church, Michael said, "If you will have lunch at one I will come eat with you. But I can't drive out to the field. We are taking advantage of the holiday to have a meeting of the Housing Board. I will be back at the latest by five o'clock for tea."

Andrew was playing on the floor in his room. "Babby will bring me an aeroplane."

"What makes you think so?"

"This one is broken."

"You shouldn't have such expensive toys. They are not for such a little boy."

"Andrew is a big boy, not a little boy," he said stoutly.

I roamed restlessly about the house, rearranging the flowers, looking two or three times into the guest room to see whether fresh paper was in the drawers and towels in the bathroom. There were many letters to be written to America, but I was in no mood to write them. "An hour's finger exercises will

be the thing!" But soon my mind wandered and my fingers stumbled on the keys.

The living room had three French windows giving out on to our courtyard garden. John had laid the rough flagstones, gathered up from the left-over stone facing of our house. The flowering moss we had planted so carefully had died, except at the edges. Among the rose bushes which bordered the flagging, many were missing after our two years' absence. The fog was coming in closer and closer. It cut off our nearest neighbors. "Too damp for Andrew to go out." The governess complained to the house-boy. Too damp for Andrew. I shivered. By the fireplace the cat was curled up on her favorite cushion. She had made a dark spot from constantly lying there. When the dog came over to sniff at her, she jumped down and ran away. I sat down on the warm pillow.

"If I go in John's study I will telephone him not to fly. I will telephone and see if they are flying. I can at least telephone the Lot" (Polish Airlines).

They had no indication from Cracow whether the plane would be running. At lunch I would ask Michael to telephone and beg them not to fly. When at one Michael came in, he said it was nonsense to telephone. The aeroplane would not leave the ground if there were danger.

With an hour to spare I got out the car. Andrew had had his nap early so he could come with me. At two in the afternoon the fog was so thick that the street cars had on their lights. I feared to miss my crossing. Out by the old airport, used now for amateurs, there was an unusual silence. No planes were taking off. There were none of the aeroplane buses that usually raced past us. And I thought, "If something happens to the car now, no one will ever find us."

"Mummy, sing me a song," Andrew begged. "Mummy, tell me a story."

"A story of being way off in the world of make-believe as we are now?"

In an hour's time we reached the airport. We should

have done it in half an hour. We were just in time. There was the plane now — you could hear it overhead.

We ran through the building and out to the barrier on the field. A loud speaker was calling, "Plane down from Bucharest. Plane down from Bucharest. Plane down —"

"What about the Cracow plane?"

"It's overhead. It had to leave the field clear for the foreign plane."

"It will land in ten minutes."

"Or a quarter of an hour."

On the bench in the window a friend was sitting.

"Christine!"

"Dorothy!"

"Pella's coming up. Her brother died last night. She doesn't know it yet."

"Poor thing."

"You?"

"I'm waiting for John and my mother-in-law."

There was a tremendous roar. The plane had just cleared the hangar. We ran out again.

"They missed it!"

"Missed it?"

We came in and sat down once more.

"What happened to Pella's brother?"

Ten minutes later the plane came back. This time it was flying higher. From the half open door of the radio room I heard, in Polish, "Why are you so high?" Then, "He says he can't find the beam."

A man rushed past me. "Get the Army field lights," he called.

The door shut. There was a long silence. "Where are they now?" I asked an attendant.

"They are ordered back to Cracow."

"Back to Cracow?"

"There is less fog there."

My heart was beating painfully. "What did the man say?" Andrew asked.

"They are to go back to Cracow. But I will ask someone else."

Out on the flying field they were shooting rockets. You could hear them popping. It was nearly dark. Once there was a roar above us as the plane circled the field.

"Tell them to wait till dusk. The beacons will be visible after dark," someone screamed.

Andrew clenched his fist and shook it at the invisible plane. "If you kill my Poppy, Mr. Pilot, I will kill you."

"Andrew," I said, shocked, "how can you think of such a thing!"

"Please buy me something. The lady over there wants me to have an aeroplane!" Andrew begged, dragging on my arm to pull me to the newspaper counter.

The door to the wireless room opened again. More men ran out. I followed, asking, "Why don't they land?" He paid no attention, but entering a telephone booth, I overheard one man telephone the Military Hospital for an ambulance, and the other for the Police.

I ran back to where Christine was sitting. "There has been an accident," she told me.

"Was anyone hurt?" I asked the guard.

"Probably everyone was killed," he said bitterly.

"You are trying to frighten us. No one was ever killed on the Polish Line."

"The radio doesn't answer. It hasn't answered for the last five minutes."

Employees and attendants were running in all directions, taking their coats and hurrying to the main entrance. "Where was the accident?" I kept asking. I asked each one, but no one answered.

"Shall we follow in your car and send Andrew back home in mine?" Christine asked.

"Let me first call my brother-in-law." I dialled my house. Michael answered.

"There has been an accident."

"Anyone hurt?"

"No one knows. I am sending Andrew home in the Potocki's car. Their chauffeur will bring you here."

When I reached the main door, most of the attendants had gone. Only one car was still waiting for the military doctor and the Chief of Police. "I will follow you," I said.

"That is impossible. All relatives must wait before the Military Hospital on the Langewicza."

"All the same, I am following you," I called, as the car pulled away. Now the fog was like a thick rain. It clung to the windshield and froze with the particles of mud that were flung up by the car ahead, driving fifty miles an hour along a narrow lane. I followed at a few paces, fearing to lose it. At a few yards' distance the car was already invisible. We were crossing fields by farm roads, and both cars frequently spun circles in the mud. In order to see through the windshield I had to lift it wide open. I could hear the even voice of Christine at my side, saying, "Steady there. That's all right. Steady now. Left here. Straight ahead. All right now. Steady — steady." At every right angle turn the ambulance swerved half around, and, unable to use the brakes in the heavy mud, I skidded to the side of the road. "Steady now."

"Do you think they have medicines in the ambulance?"

"They took time enough. They must have everything."

Now we came up to a main road on which soldiers were marching, soldiers, tanks and armored cars. We crept along the grassy siding. My beam headlight had burned out, and I could not see the soldiers I was brushing past. Though barely a foot from the car they did not hear me above their marching song and the rumble of the heavy guns.

"They're returning from the Armistice Day parade."

"Was there a parade?"

"This morning."

My heart was sick, my brain dead, like a stone. Nor did my imagination suggest what I should find when we reached our destination.

Five miles down the road the ranks were broken, and the

ambulance ahead plunged down a slippery bank on to a pitch black field. I followed to where it stopped, churning mud all over my car. There was nothing to be seen beyond the ring of lights made by the dozen cars that had preceded us there.

Christine got out. I shivered, pulling my coat about me. Our little dog who had been crouching in the back seat, jumped into the seat beside me. A hundred people were milling around here. John surely would appear in an instant, a little dazed. It was better to wait for him here than miss him by running about aimlessly in the muddy field.

"Are you Mrs. Kostanecka?" A peasant's voice. "I thought so by your pearls. The lady is dead there. Her pearls are just like yours. Your husband told me you were coming with your little boy. He is expecting you."

"He is not hurt, surely."

"The gentleman told me. He was wearing a grey and black checked coat."

"That was he. Thank God!"

Some of the passengers were coming to the bus, which was two cars beyond us in the field. Some were walking alone; others the soldiers were supporting. They were visible in the light made by the cars' headlights.

"Where is my husband? Mr Kostanecki?"

"He's very bad — bad — bad."

"How do you mean?"

"He may not be living. Oh, frightful! Frightful! Oh! Oh!"

"I was a colleague of your husband. Poor woman! He is very bad."

"Get back in your car, Madame. We must move the bus. Your car blocks the passage."

I moved the car a little to the side. After the bus had pulled out the car arrived with Michael.

"Mulka has been killed."

"Have you seen her?"

"I was waiting here for John. We can try and find them."

"Is John all right?"

"So a woman tells me. Some other passengers say he is badly — " I could not say the words.

"Where was the accident?"

"The people came from there."

Three steps, and the heavy mud had sucked off my shoes. In the black night my feet were invisible. I stooped down to pick up my shoes, and when I stood up Michael was gone. "Michael!" No answer. Our little bitch came sniffing to my feet. "Look for your master. He may have fainted on this field," I said to the dog. How indeed if he had fainted would we find John? He might die of exposure before we reached him. Even the car's searchlights could not pierce the fog but for a short distance. I fell against the soldiers guarding the spot where the plane had crashed. "Mr. Kostanecki," I begged them frantically. "I am looking for Mr. Kostanecki. Tell him the car is by the others."

About the invisible wrecked plane the soldiers stood in line. They would not let me near it. Moving in the center of the circle with a light was a doctor, bandaging figures stretched on the ground. To the left was the empty ambulance. I stood by it waiting while the first of the wounded was brought up, a man, whose bandaged head was covered with a dirty plaid coat.

"Who is that?" I asked the attendants.

"It's a Mr. Band."

"And that?"

"The lady is the gentleman's wife."

A woman was carried by on a stretcher, deathly pale, and then another.

"That will be Pella," I thought, and called her name. When the four stretchers were put in place, the ambulance drove off.

Someone shouted, "Will that cholera of a private cholera pull out!"

I heard someone turn over my motor, and the motor stall. The little bitch was whining at my feet. "Where is our master, Irena? Our master?" I tried to run back to the car. My feet were burning, caked with mud, my stock-

ings torn off below the ankle. Michael was standing by the automobile. A man had the hood up and was tinkering with the motor.

"Look at the mess you have made with my car! Short circuited the headlights! Get out."

I switched on the motor and pushed slowly into high gear, so as not to grind deeper into the mud. Like magic the car moved to the side and the ambulance pulled away.

Christine was following. "Pella is wounded. If John should come to the hospital I will tell him where you are."

"We are staying a little longer to be sure he is not still here."

"Perhaps he reached the high road."

"He might try to hitch hike to Warsaw."

"Yes," I said, comforted. "He would try to get home as fast as possible."

"I will see what is to be done about Mulka, and be back instantly," Michael said. "Wait in the car."

Waiting in the car, I dismissed what the other passengers had said. John and I lived under a glass bell. Our life was one — John had said it. We would both be killed together. It was terrible about Mulka, but John had luck because he loved me. Nothing could happen to him. This very instant he might be along the road. He would have hailed the special bus. Already he would be in Warsaw. The necessity of finding John was so strong in me that, to the amazement of the remaining chauffeurs, I turned the car as easily as if it had been standing on pavement. The mud, the nightmare of Mulka's death, the fog which hid everything under a black pall, could not obstruct my way. When Michael returned to the car, we drove back to Warsaw as if my eyes could penetrate the dark. My headlights had gone out, but I steered a course through marching men, passing trucks and farmers' wagons. I could drive slowly. I did not feel the pressure of time, for John steadied my hand and his voice close in my ear directed my way. Unconscious of my bruised and shoeless feet, like a sleepwalker, I drove slowly into town and across the city to our house.

"John !" I called as I opened the door. John had not telephoned. The bell had not rung. "You are certain ?"

"I waited in the hall after Mr. Michael telephoned for further news."

I slipped on a pair of shoes and left for the military hospital.

A line was standing there before the desk. "Mr. Kostanecki was not brought in from the field," the attendant informed us.

"Perhaps another wing ?" Michael inquired.

"Yes . . . an unidentified corpse was in the ambulance that left for the morgue."

We tore outside.

An ambulance was standing by the door, the driver smoking nonchalantly.

"Were you at the field ?"

"Yes."

"Is there someone in there ?"

"I have orders to let no one in."

We threw open the door. Could that really be John ? The face so distorted, the whole figure so caked in mud ! He was not even covered with a blanket.

"That is my husband. Drive him to my house."

"Orders ! He will have to go to the city morgue."

"If you will not drive the ambulance to my house, I will," I said, springing to his seat.

"Orders," the driver said grumblingly, as I pushed in the stiff clutch.

"You can come with us."

"I will drive, if you tell me where to go."

"Then Michael, you sit with the driver. I will sit with John."

While John's head rolled on the hard pad, I thought wildly of letters on his desk he had not read. What had he left behind to show the world what he had been ? And there flashed through my mind's eye the Etruscan Tomb of the Volumni . . . the national monuments, and all the nameless dead whose tombs we had passed so idly. Gone with-

out a trace ! How cruel that John should go before his book which he was preparing on the "manipulated currency" would reach its American publishers. Only one of the articles on mathematical economy for the American Economists' Society. I tried not to look at the fine features, distorted now in death, or to face the empty years ahead. Both seemed irrelevant. Why had I not protested ? Kept him to his promise not to fly ? "Because," a voice within me answered, "death is no accident."

"Amen. Thy will be done."

This, then, was my punishment for loving John too much, for basing my life on his life, for not having once paused in loving John to wonder why we lived.

"For this I am bringing John home dead. Oh God, Thy will be done"

The ambulance stood by our house. The two men carried John up the stairs. "The Master is dead" The maids stood weeping on the stairs. Only the little bitch wagged her tail and jumped about the stretcher to lick the hand that was hanging down.

"Put him in the drawing room."

"Call the Priest"

"The undertaker too."

"We must telephone to Cracow"

"Yes. Tell Tatus before he hears it on the radio."

Our door was open to the street. My grief was open now to all the world. All that was home to me would soon be carried out, away, to be buried under alien soil. Death is a public thing. John was no longer mine. Already people were entering our house — the undertaker, the Priest, some friends. I crept back to our room and to Andrew's. Andrew was sleeping. As I stood by his bed, the sight of John's orphaned child broke me completely. I wept, not from self pity. I wanted no pity ; I had had more happiness than anyone deserved. I wept for John, who could not pass on to his son the richness of his own mind, and for Andrew, who would have only me. I stood by the wall and struck my head against it in unconscious grief.

"This way lies madness. How unworthy of John! I am what he made me," I suddenly realized. "I disgrace him now when he is most helpless. From now on I must live an outward life as he would live it, with an exterior bearing that hides our secret life. This is my only chance to keep John now," I thought. "This life is over. No one will penetrate it," I told him. "Dearest, as I longed to give you liberty in life, I will be faithful to you in death. I promise not to betray through grief our secrets and our feelings. To the world nothing will be changed. Your friends will find you here when they come. No one will ever see me with tears in my eyes, for no one can comfort me but you, my beloved. This is our secret grief, as it was our secret love."

In our room some of his cousins were sitting.

"Dearest!"

"You poor, poor thing"

"Weep a little — it will help you."

"Nothing can help me," I replied.

Michael telephoned to Cracow. Andzia answered. "Call Father from the Club and tell him. Do you hear me?" Andzia had fainted at the telephone.

During the Armistice celebrations in the Grand Opera House, the Chairman of the performance paused to give the radio announcement. Friends who heard it came at once. They knelt beside his bed and prayed. What were they saying? They took John from me and seemed to help him while I stood aside.

"I cannot pray. It's all meaningless to me."

"*Swieta Mario Matko Boska —*"

I took *King Lear* and went to my room. "This," I thought, "is the level of our life. I will read at night rather than let myself slip." The full Renaissance power of Shakespeare never seemed keener than that night. Never did the plight of *King Lear* appear so real.

At four in the morning I saw a light shining under the guest room door.

"May I come in?"

Michael was standing in the bathroom, shaving slowly.

"Did I disturb you?" he asked.

"No, I couldn't sleep. I came in to talk to you."

"As soon as I am dressed I am going out there."

"I wish you could drive the car."

"I'll have to learn now. What I keep asking myself is : Why did it have to be John and not me? He had everything to live for. I have nothing. He was successful. I am not."

"You mustn't talk that way."

"John's death will be much worse for Tatus."

"*Michael!*"

Early in the morning, Andrew ran in to our room.

"Where's my Poppy?"

"He went another way."

"When will he come?"

"He won't come now. He has gone on up to the sky, above the clouds."

"That's not true. The horrid pilot killed my Poppy. He fell down and broke. The aeroplane went boom!"

How could I answer him? I tried not to cry. He put his arms around me. "I'll be Poppy for you now. Don't cry. Where is your kerkersniff?" Then, toddling into the bathroom, he sprinkled the floor with the water which he was bringing in a glass. "Mummy lie down and drink the water. I will sit here, as Poppy always did. I will have my bed brought in to sleep by you. Yes?"

Old Andzia came with Tatus from Cracow. Though crushed, her duties gave her fortitude. As Andrew wished to sleep with me, she was to use his room.

"Madame must rest," she ordered.

"Andzia, how can I ever rest again?"

"You can change nothing," she said. "The lady must learn to bear it."

"All the same, I am haunted by the thought I could have prevented it. If only I had begged John not to come by plane! Or if I had gone for my own doctor, he might have saved John's life. He was not killed outright. The peasant woman told me that he spoke to her."

"Let Madame not torture herself so. God appoints for everyone his day. Master John will be spared untold suffering on this earth, you will see. Mulka he has surely taken to Himself."

"John had so much still to do. His book is only just half finished."

"God would not now have taken him like this unless he was ready for Eternity."

"Eternity!" These were empty words to me.

During the long afternoon a few of our closest friends came to my room. "Dorothy dear," they said, and knelt down at my side, "be comforted. This is not an idle accident of Fate. You will see. You will live to thank God for sparing John still greater sufferings."

"Since you loved him you should rejoice that he has gone while we can still mourn and pray for him. Think if he should have died unhonored and unsung"

"Anielka," I begged his cousin, "do you really believe in God and Heaven?"

"Yes, truly."

"That nothing is pure accident?"

"Of course. I believe life is only a period of test, and that on how we pass it depends our future eternity."

"The Greeks say 'the beloved of the Gods die young.'"

"That is only part of it. On earth none of us can guess when he has finished the part he had to play."

"John had felt a dark shadow hanging over him."

"He must have known death was near."

All day long streams of people came to the house. Hundreds of people came and left their cards. The doorbell rang incessantly. The messenger boy brought telegrams — over a thousand messages from other parts of Poland, France and Italy, from England and America. Flowers — great yellow tufted chrysanthemums and wreaths of myrtle. Many came to pray, and stood beside the coffin weeping gently, leaving again without a word.

One of the cousins called a milliner to come and measure

the long black veil that reached nearly to the ground, covering me completely, and all my clothes.

Mulka's body was released on the second day after the State had completed its investigation of the causes of the deaths and had ascertained the reason for the accident. Mulka was serene in death as she had been in life. Her life had been complete. She had died a month after resigning, by doctor's orders, from the presidency of her Parish Committees. She had died swiftly, as a modern woman, in a modern way. She was spared the humiliation of a slow, lingering old age. A proud smile was on her face—a challenge to those who die supinely in their beds! But John's face was different. You could see the torture that in death he could no longer protect us both.

"Oh, God, by John's death you have brought me to my knees. I pray this is sufficient punishment to keep me humble. I am Thy handmaiden, here to serve Thy will," I thought. During those days I no longer felt crushed with impotency or a sense of guilt for not having somehow prevented the inevitable event.

At the funeral I could be calm because John wished me to be so. Our souls, I found, were more united than before. Those immense laurel funeral wreaths sent by cabinet ministers and business firms seemed but a just, fitting tribute when they were stacked about his sepulchre. I could follow the service word for word with comfort. I could feel his shadow beside me, and I could believe my "faith" had given John the peace in death which he had known in life. I held poor Tatus' hand tightly while the crowd surged past to give their last words of condolence. I remembered what a barbaric custom this had always seemed to me. But now I was glad to be able to thank this horde of friends who had waited till the end in the stormy November cold, for their evident devotion to John and Mulka.

Driving home after the ceremony, the Bishop asked, "Did the Service bring you comfort? I read a number of special prayers for you from the Anglican prayer book."

"I thank you deeply, Uncle Bishop. It all seemed so com-

plete and excellent I felt now I really must become a Catholic."

"You would only be acting under an emotional impulse. Religion is far more important as an intellectual philosophy and way of life. In a year, after you have studied diligently, you can decide."

"The Uncle Bishop will see that I speak in seriousness."

Tatus put a restraining hand on my arm. "You know how much Mulka always prayed for it. That should not today precipitate a hasty decision you would later regret. She always said 'Dorothy must not become a Catholic from a sense of duty to the family. She has not been trained to it.'"

As we drove up to the door, Edward was standing on the sidewalk. "Will the lady come at once. There is a telephone from America."

"Hello."

"Mrs. Kostanecka? Here speaks the international telephone. Please wait. Please wait. Please now speak."

It was my family in America. I could hear my mother gasp, then my brother spoke. The family was broken-hearted. They understood my grief. Mother would take the first boat. In ten days she would be in Warsaw. Someone would come with her if the doctor did not permit my father to make the journey.

The living room in which the Bishop and Tatus were standing had been restored to its former order, and yet the room seemed entirely changed. It was as impersonal as a scrupulously neat waiting room. Books, papers, all the small objects John scattered about him, had been stored away. I would certainly not replace them to create the illusion of his presence now. "An excellent room in which to receive," I thought. "Already so many strangers have crowded in here, John and I have nothing to say to each other." But Tatus, fearing that now the coffin had been removed I would be overcome, put his arms about my shoulder murmuring as he drew me into the room, "*Biedne dziecko* — my poor child — come now and sit down, a cup of tea will restore you, *Biedne dziecko*."

"Mother will cross the ocean — she is taking the first ship."

"Will she travel alone?" He asked in astonishment. I told him she planned to come immediately to Warsaw leaving my father to go to the south of France.

"Would it not be better for you or Michael to meet her in Paris?" Tatus suggested. On the day following the funeral, he left for Cracow. "Each of us must face this alone," he had said.

Jadwiga, my friend from the eastern province, when she saw the Warsaw paper and read of the accident, packed up her bag and came to me at once. I was so astonished to see her at the door that I gasped. She told me how the express had just left when she had arrived at the station, so she took the local for the eight hundred miles, and travelled third class for twenty hours from the Russian frontier.

"How could you ever leave your children and your poultry?"

"If your sister needed you, would you hesitate? You have no sister, so I came. The boys are now old enough to take care of themselves."

"But the chickens?"

"The business is going well this autumn. I supply five hundred pieces to Lwow every week and we have other orders too. This year I have turkeys and ducks as well as chickens."

"How did you manage to get away?"

"I only came to see how you were. If you don't need me I will return tomorrow. I can go shopping for you. I'll call up your friends. You must not sit down to a meal alone. You should not be concerned with all these arrangements." In the morning she telephoned to some about meals, others to help address the five thousand envelopes for the acknowledgment cards, other friends would make clippings from the papers I did not now care to read. Members of the family would answer the letters, I was still too stunned to write.

In the *Encyclopaedia of Economists* it was printed:

"It can be said with exactitude of the late John Kostanecki that he fell as a soldier at his post. He and his mother were killed on the 11th of November, 1937, returning from his lecture at the University of Cracow. Among the wreckage were found scattered pages of a manuscript he was preparing for the 'Economist.' He followed a path rarely chosen by scholars. After achieving a brilliant doctor's degree in law at the University of Cracow, he obtained the title of Ph.D at the London School of Economics. He worked with the Kemmerer Mission in Warsaw, and went through banking practice in both Warsaw and New York. He worked in the League of Nations in Geneva, and undertook economic research for the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and for the Polish Legation in Vienna concerning the economic conditions in the Danubian Basin.

"Though he had chosen a longer road than most scholars, it gave him greater knowledge of world economic conditions. It was only after that he joined the staff of the University of Cracow, and became Assistant Professor in the spring of 1937. But during these years he published many articles in various reviews. Mastery of this subject gave him an ease of thought and clarity of presentation, and such a thorough mastery of theory that he could briefly evaluate the facts and make deductions. The seriousness, integrity and prudence of his opinions gave entire assurance that this training, unusual in Poland, would also produce unusual results. It is difficult to say who in Poland will be able to take his place in research, or in scholastic work.

"He had the broadest human interests, with great aesthetic sensibility, and there was no field of art that did not interest him. He was fine, noble, disinterested, the most reliable of colleagues. Such a man cannot be replaced, nor can his loss be forgotten."

From The *Times* Editorial :

"He inherited from his parents unusual intelligence and a very gifted mind. He was brought up in a highly intellectual atmosphere, with a first rate education. Nature endowed him lavishly with a rich intellect and an unusually fine, honest, simple character, loyal in friendship and with a charm that won all hearts. He was not only an economist, but an author, and in art and painting a real connoisseur.

"The accident was the more horrible as his life was radiant with

family happiness, and in spite of his youth he possessed an unusually large circle of devoted, faithful friends. He promised so much! Everything prophesied a fine fruitful life. Of all this nothing remains but the memory of his good, lovely, and always slightly melancholy smile."

From The Voice of the People Editorial :

"His life reached far beyond the average of Polish conditions and he knew how to make the best of his exceptional opportunities, having on the one hand unusual conscientious thoroughness and the faculty for diligent work, and on the other a lively understanding of everything beautiful and good. His earnest work could not but justify in even the most jealous eyes all his social success and brilliant achievements. Half a year ago he was appointed Assistant Professor of Economics at the University of Cracow. It was always an amazement that among so many temptations of life, in the noblest sense of the word, he was able without help to keep abreast of the latest scientific discoveries and plough through the most complicated and intricate theoretical dissertations. He published several important works, including 'The Discount Policy of the Bank of England' and 'The Danubian Economic Problem'. But the most valuable of his ideas was revealed in scientific discussions and conversation. The terrible and tragic death which overtook him cut off a life which seemed a blossoming flower in the sterile Polish field. All Poland is moved by the calamity which has stricken his wife and father. May the knowledge of this widespread grief soothe their intolerable pain."

Miss "Book" came to the house every afternoon as soon as her classes were over, to help with the writing of the letters which kept coming in every day. I asked her whether she had heard over the radio of the accident and how it was that she had managed to be there within a half hour of my coming home. She told me that she had been sitting at home in conference with the other primary teachers. She had just brought them tea when they all heard a knock at the door. She went to open it. When she came out in the hall, there stood Mr. John in his new blue suit with the white pinstripe. She was so startled to see him that she said, "Oh, Mr. John, how kind of you to come and call on me!"

He did not answer but put his hand to his head and when he took it away she saw the wound in his forehead. *"Go to my wife, I beg you, and please never leave her as long as it is in your power to help her."*

When she saw the wound, she cried out, and at that he vanished. She was so terrified she ran back and told the other teachers what she had seen. Feeling compelled at once to come to me, she left them at her house and crossed the whole city. It took her three-quarters of an hour by the street car to reach my house and when she arrived, she saw the ambulance standing before the door. She waited until the driver came out and left, before daring to enter. When she saw what had happened, she had not wished to speak to me but had knelt by John's side with the others.

"You know I will do everything to help you. I have only three hours free in the afternoon but they will be yours and Andrew's."

How could I thank her for time for which she would not now let me pay and which she could so ill afford to spare. She was so frail, she needed the rest, and her days were so wearing, yet she never failed to appear.

We had not finished all the letters before my mother arrived in Paris. Michael did not wish me to travel alone and went with me to meet my mother. She spent the winter in Warsaw and in the spring, returned to America.

CHAPTER 17

*E*VER since I had known anything of Warsaw, I had heard eulogies of the Asylum for the Blind at Piaski. It was run by a group of young Catholics as a lay organization. There were rumors that a British Ambassadors had been so deeply impressed by this organization that she decided to become a Catholic. For the first time she saw Catholicism as a far deeper and more vital force than she had imagined from watching stodgy old ladies telling their beads in church.

In the course of many conversations I had caught the names of various people who had joined Piaski. Later I noticed that they had slipped out of fashionable society. It was hinted that Zulcia had given everything to Piaski. Some one whispered that, after the death of his father, Leonek had turned over the whole of his inheritance. I also heard that Halcia was about to join them, and that Rozyczka was working for them. However, I had no real idea of what Piaski was, so I asked Halcia, a childhood friend of John's what they did there.

"We train the blind to be self supporting," she told me. "Each year our Directress visits a different country to study the best foreign methods. I couldn't really tell you about it, you would have to see it."

"I should like to," I replied vaguely, without enthusiasm.

"It's only a short drive," she urged. "If you came out after lunch you could be back for tea. The land was given by that friend of Rozyczka's."

I pictured a made-over farm house for a few blind children. "Shall we go Thursday, then?" I suggested.

To my surprise, as we emerged from the highroad, we came upon a substantial institution. It was dominated by a fine modern building with a large grassy turn-around that gave it a certain dignity. At one side a lane led to the old white-washed barns and chicken houses of the original farm, set down without much ceremony along a muddy farm road. Strung out along another road as it straggled into the wood, were little buildings, some of brick and some of wood, among them a small wooden chapel.

As soon as we entered the main building, Halcia and Zulcia showed me the way to the classrooms and the gymnasium and left me in the large auditorium. Asking to be excused, they immediately became absorbed in a whispered conversation with the director and several of the teachers. I was left to wander about by myself. I had never before seen so many blind, deaf and crippled children. There were, altogether four hundred of them, and the sight of these poor children was in itself so unpleasant that even the most beautiful surroundings would have presented themselves in a mournful light. I was hardly even aware of the fine steel and concrete structure about me. Nor did I know anything about teaching the blind, and so I was a poor judge of the quality of the classrooms giving off the long corridors. But I could appreciate the work of feeding and clothing so many children and I was staggered to think how my friends had accomplished it.

Some of the older children were preparing a pantomime on the auditorium stage, others were making hideous noises while learning choral songs. The littlest children were climbing up and down the stairs without supervision. Each had a still smaller child by the hand and by some miracle they neither fell headlong nor collided with the toddlers descending by the opposite rail. Whenever they passed me they seemed to sense a stranger was there, and put out their hands to feel me. I had no idea how to respond to them. They made me so uncomfortable that, without waiting for my friends to reappear, I went outside.

It was one of those late May days when, in the shade, the cold wind felt more like March, though the bright sunlight

seemed to burn holes through the chill air. The wind roared in the pine woods and made the weeping birch sway like a metronome. Keeping in the sun, I hurried along the path that led to the lea of the barnyard which was enclosed on four sides by cleanly whitewashed buildings. There were two small cottages along the way, and as I passed, some ancient dames came to the doorway to call a greeting. They must have felt my step, for they too were blind. In the dairy, blind boys were milking cows under the direction of the farmer, learning a self-supporting trade. But the girls? For what were they preparing?

I was leaning against a protecting wall when Leonek, a cousin of John's, appeared. He was dressed in an old sheepskin lined leather jacket. The red braid trimming was soiled and threadbare. His head was covered in an old fur turban, and his tweed trousers had rusted in the sun.

"Did Halcia bring you out?" he asked pleasantly. "Have you seen everything?"

"Not yet. I left Halcia and Zulcia in the main building and came out here."

"Then I will show you the men's quarters and the chapel. They will show you where the women are trained," he said, and led the way at a brisk trot. He chose a more sheltered path at the edge of the wood where several white painted cottages were secluded among the trees. Going to the door of one, he said, "This is where I live, if you would care to see my room. It's at the top."

He bounded ahead up the narrow spotless stairs, clean with monastic scrupulousness. He had a small attic room, a narrow bed, a table and a shelf of books, and on the wall photographs of Rubens' *Descent from the Cross*. His "other suit" hung against the wall under a cover, and a small chest of drawers must have held all the rest of his possessions. There were no stray objects in sight.

"How neat!" was all I could find to say. The contrast of this room with others Leonek had renounced flashed through my mind: his father's palace in Rome with the portraits of Polish Kings covering the walls of eleven draw-

ing rooms. I wondered whether he had ceased to be Chamberlain of the Pope. I knew he had left the lovely Renaissance castle in Corinthia to his sisters, and that he had offered the house on the family estate to the Polish Army as a recreation center for the soldiers stationed in the region.

I looked at Leonek, who was cut out by inheritance and training to be a Papal Chamberlain in the gorgeous trappings of the Vatican, standing before me dressed like a peasant. He had given up a promising diplomatic career to teach blind boys how to milk cows. He had not even gone into the priesthood, for fear of diverting his energies from "serving" into making a career. As Leonek led me from one to another building, he explained how one person had given the dairy farm, another the cattle. Someone else had bought the adjacent birch woods, others had built the houses and the log chapel. Leonek, I imagined, must have donated the main building with the auditorium. I knew Michael gave the larger part of his income every month to running expenses in Piaski, though he had not yet joined the group. He had tried at various times to make me understand their feeling of social obligation. I could remember certain of his phrases : "The people who have the money should take care of those who haven't." It was as simple as that. "If you haven't money, of course you have no obligation ; but if you have money, you have to do something constructive. Pretty soon there will be no private capital anyway," he would say with a grin. "Certainly better to give it away while it is still yours to give."

All these people out here felt that way, Leonek made me understand. They were all about his age, in their twenties and thirties. They had joined Piaski because they no longer felt the usual charity work everyone did, a few hours a day, was enough. They had to give their whole time, their entire energies, their complete resources to live a totally Christian life, a life of charity, humility and poverty. As I could see, this small school which they had founded to train blind adults had grown to include blind children and even deaf mutes.

Leonek did not have to tell me what sacrifices he and the other members of Piaski have made. All had been born into wealth and social position. Leonek had quickly risen to First Secretary of Embassy, though he was one of the few wealthy men's sons at the Polish Foreign Office that had done so. Both Zulcia and Halcia could have made brilliant marriages. They were connected to the best country gentry and handsome young men swarmed through their drawing rooms. Rozyczka's father was a literary giant and her brother the first physicist in Poland. They had not joined through any vain notions of noblesse oblige or tickling their vanity by "doing good." They gained no publicity. No one knew the day they joined or what they did. They did not even wear a romantic costume. They all dressed in plain, nondescript suits which they wore summer and winter, on all occasions.

As early as 1935, Michael had told me the next war would become a conflict between barbarianism and Christianity. Stalin and Hitler both attacked the church and were equally opposed to any religious organization except a state church.

"You will see," Leonek told me, "the church will be the only champion of the universal right to a free education — free radio and free press."

"What about Mussolini and Franco working through the church?" I reminded him.

"When did the church actually co-operate with them?" he asked. "Some misguided prelates may have personally sympathized with Fascism but the church never approved of it. The dictators cleverly tried to get popular support by appearing to champion the church." I must have seemed unconvinced for he urged me to read the Papal Encyclicals.

He told me the informal international organization they were establishing. Money was being collected to aid young German and Russian Catholics. Anti-Nazi publications printed in German were smuggled over the frontier. Many of my friends who obtained German visas to visit art exhibitions met secretly with young German Catholics, and provided them with funds painfully collected in Poland from persons already living on the margin of subsistence.

Their Catholicism had left the drawing room and gone underground in the fight against both Communism and Fascism. Hitler's repudiation of Concordats, his confiscation of Church property, was proof enough of his intentions. They were not misled by his anti-Communist talk. They also realized that if indeed the Communists reached an agreement with their Bishops, their traditional church, which worships Holy Russia, would be no substitute for a real religion.

With these political ideas I was in full agreement. Even before John died we had discussed them. What I could not understand even after visiting Piaski was the Catholic idea of humility. It was clear that the Uncle Bishop would never permit my joining the Catholic church until I understood that fundamental dogma. On the next favorable opportunity I decided to broach this topic with Mr. Savery, the British Consul, himself a convert.

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Usually I took a walk at three o'clock in the afternoon. Sometimes through the crowded park to the Botanic Gardens, thronged even in the coldest weather with women and children. Sometimes I would drive the car out to the great forest fortress that circled Warsaw like a close protecting wall where one could walk on the old battle trenches, now firm and smooth with grass and heather. These woods, from ancient times, had been the last defense of Warsaw. On days of icy wind or torrid heat, I would choose the shut-in forest for protection, but it was along the dykes of the Vistula that I loved best to walk.

During the ten years I lived in Warsaw, the whole outline of the city had changed. Across the river you could see the new promenade along the waterfront, and great modern dwellings, blocks of steel and concrete encased in stone, which hid the soft baroque outline of the old tile roofs. I had heard foreigners call it "Building for the Germans," but Poles closed their ears to such talk and shut it from their minds.

From the dykes, the full open dome of heaven and the

vast circle of the horizon were hardly broken by the spires of Warsaw across the river. You could follow for miles along that high mound of earth that protected the wide Vistula plain. Here Pilsudski had turned back the Bolshevik hordes in 1920, while Marshal Foch sat sulking in Warsaw because Pilsudski had not put the river between him and the enemy.

Here I learned that death is not the end but the beginning. On these plains Poles had died in every generation, fighting for Poland. Therefore, Poland lived. This was clear to everyone in Poland: "Nations only die when their people put their personal comfort before their country's welfare."

When one afternoon Mr. Savery invited me for a walk along the river, I seized the opportunity to discuss those problems which were troubling me most. "What are the Catholic ideas of meekness, charity, Free Will vs. Destiny," I began, "I can't grasp them."

"Leonek is a perfect example," Mr. Savery said.

Still I could not understand. "What does he gain by burying himself out in that school?"

"He humbly serves God," he replied.

"Then why does he not become a priest?" I asked.

"Being a priest is already a position, even if it's the bottom rung of the ladder. I think he doesn't want to be distracted by even that pomp and ceremony. After his father's death, he inherited his position as Papal Chamberlain. He could have made a great career in the Church, had he wished. He preferred to serve God, by sacrificing his life to charity."

"Charity," I seized on the word. "In America social workers live for charity," I pointed out.

"That's not real charity. It's a job, and they make a career for themselves in it too."

"What is wrong with that?" I asked.

"Not wrong. But it is not the same as charity. American social work is a paid profession, like school teaching. Charity cannot be paid. Unless charity means a sacrifice it is a contradiction in terms. Do American social workers feel humble before the people they serve?"

"Why should poverty make one feel humble?" This was a conception I could not grasp. I had always felt intensely sorry for the poor. During my childhood in Boston, while my father was director of Lincoln House, I had seen many poor families and heard of their problems. I would have gladly engaged in any heroic deed to change their lot. Because of this emotion, I had felt rather proud and superior towards my classmates at Miss Windsor's School. Now I was being told I had no conception of charity. "Do you believe the lowliest, most ignorant beggar can come as close to God as, say you or I?"

"I think it possible."

This amazing reply, coming from Mr Savery, who I felt had the finest intellect of any of our friends knocked all my props from under me. The cold wind buffeting the aeroplanes wheeling overhead chilled me through.

Wildly, as if in a final challenge to God himself, I cried out, "How could an omnipotent God let John die?"

"When war comes, John will be spared all of it," he said earnestly. "Would you prefer to have him killed on a battleground?"

"Why should God allow wars anyway?" I demanded. "I really don't see how anyone can believe in a Supreme Being if He could not prevent war."

"It all comes down to why we are on earth. Certainly not just to eat and sleep —" Savery began.

"Or to fight wars like animals for survival," I interrupted. A flock of crows flew up from the willow thicket along the river, and cawing mournfully, settled in the high branches of the bare sycamores.

"A different kind of survival," he corrected gently, "spiritual, not animal. War brings opportunities of heroism, generosity and dying to save others, inconceivable in animals."

"So the best are killed and the cowards live on —"

"To have another chance of lifting themselves above the animal level."

"But only the worst are left to carry on. Look how France is degenerated."

"Let's not talk like Nazis," he said with feeling. "There are millions of fine individuals in France."

The aeroplanes that had been practicing acrobatics at a great height now swooped down to cross the river, frightening the flock of crows, which flew off across the meadow with a great clatter.

"But during war what happens to progress?" I asked, digging my cold hands deeper into my pockets.

"Progress!" he exclaimed. "What, historically, do you mean by progress?"

"Surely progress is the greatest good for the greatest number," I recited as if by rote.

"Good, my dear child, is not synonymous with 'goods.' Goods have a way of stifling men's souls. With all today's material wealth, do men have more security than in the past? The nineteenth century reached the peak of peace and prosperity, it also reached the height of cynicism and agnosticism, for which we will now pay a terrible price. When war comes you will believe in God. You will have no one else to turn to"

"An expensive way to learn religion!"

"Few people value anything unless they pay a high price for it," he remarked. "The price for learning about good and God will be expensive — the brotherhood of man, real Christian love — and charity will become permanent only when brutality proves a failure."

"I still don't see why a God creates evil"

"God does not create evil. He created the free man, who has an unbounded choice to do good or evil. An animal can only follow its instinct. Because men have free choice, they can make a good or bad society. God does not organize the state."

"So you believe war is in the long run beneficial?"

"Not the war, but the results of war," he replied. "It's only in war-time that small nations gain an equality with great. Promises made under war-time necessity often force useful reforms, impossible to obtain under other conditions."

Now the heavy wind, which had filled the sky with dark

clouds, chased the planes away. Hastening our pace we turned toward home.

"Perhaps all you say is right," I had to admit. I could remember John's saying, "Everything that happens to us during life is a lesson and whether it's a harder or easier existence lies in the temper of our times." I began to realize through the hard road of war, nations would finally live in peace and cease blaming God for their own shortcomings.

"Until John died," I said, "it never occurred to me that I had not complete control over my destiny. Now I realize this control was given me for only a short span of years over only a small part of my destiny. If John were only the memory he left in dying, how futile would all his versatility and erudition have been. Going over his printed articles, so many of which are lost and incapable of translation, I realize they too are unimportant as far as he is concerned."

Mr. Savery took my hand. "Oh, I'm so glad to hear you say that now. How few Poles live to an old age. Polish history is written in the blood of their young men, and Poles can bear to see them die because they are so sure of meeting them in eternity."

Across the river, Warsaw was wreathed in an ominous cloud like a black curtain. It blocked out the sun. Suddenly we both felt cold.

"Let's hurry home to tea, to hear what's happening," I urged.

"The news from Austria sounded bad this morning," he told me. "For the last three days German troops have been marching towards the frontier."

"If only you in England would stop them!"

"Everything depends on the plebiscite Schuschnigg is holding."

"You still think they will wait for the plebiscite?"

How could one answer? A heavy black pall had hung over me ever since the night of John's death, icy cold like this late spring. I felt crushed by the colossal weight of the inescapable tragedy of the general paralysis creeping over Europe.

We had hardly returned when one of our friends from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs arrived in a great state of agitation. "I didn't dare telephone you. It won't be in the papers. We have positive information the Germans crossed at Linz."

"Then it's begun." I imagined the war had now started. "Have the Austrians asked Poland for help?"

"We can't get through to Vienna, but Schuschnigg wanted to fight."

"What did the Austrian Army plan to do?"

"Hold the Germans a day or two till the Czechs and Yugoslavs reached them," Thadee replied.

"Are they mobilizing?" I asked.

"We heard that they were. Of course it's all still a secret."

We huddled together about the fire, listening in our hearts to the throbbing tread of the German armies pouring into Austria. I shivered at the thought of those lovely peaceful meadows trampled under foreign boots, and of all my friends there in mortal danger.

As if reading my thoughts, Thadee warned, "Don't telephone anyone in Vienna. The Gestapo would seize them immediately. They will know without a message that you would take them in — friends are for times like these"

"Perhaps they haven't ready cash, or sufficient supplies in the house."

"It's too late to get it to them now," Thadee insisted.

Before the guests had gone I decided to leave for Cracow. I had the bags brought up, the administrator was summoned and the car sent to the service station. As soon as Michael returned, I told him my plan to leave early the next morning. He did not believe anything would come of the Austrian crisis. "No one will fight over Austria," he protested. But he was agreed we should go to Cracow. For some time Tatus had been urging us both to come and settle the estate. Although neither Michael nor I wished to hasten the division of property, we both felt obliged to do as Tatus wished.

We telephoned Cracow. You could hear under the busi-

nesslike tone of Tatus' voice the joy in our coming. He proposed a multitude of trivialities — suitable food for the trip, warm robes and overcoats. He made us promise to bring Edward, the house-boy in case of a breakdown and to send the nursemaid away on her vacation.

Soon after we arrived in Cracow, I was alone in my room and asked Andzia how it had been in the last war.

"Somehow one managed to find an egg here, an egg there. Country women smuggled them to town. Bread was not good, for the substitute flour was bad, but we got on. But does the young lady really believe the Germans will come now?"

"What do they say at the market?"

"People talk of it," Andzia replied, "but they have no fear. Somehow we will manage. God will protect us."

"I wish you would get a few supplies."

"Flour becomes wormy if you keep it too long. The Professor does not wish it. I will make many preserves and jam. But it is not well to have stocks in the larder."

Andzia was reassuring and confident. Surely one could not foretell the future. This tragic year had proved that. Now my own sister was dying in New York, and even the greatest doctors and the best of care could not save her. One must learn to live as the Poles did, with confidence that one was fulfilling one's destiny, and make the best of each problem when it presented itself. No use standing still, immobilized with fear, or trying to hide away. It was clear that even the Tibetan steppes would be no refuge in this war. "There is no escape, whether I stay here or run away. The disaster of this war will be everywhere." As surely as I had been drawn against my will into this land, so indeed must I suffer with it. As a prelude to this suffering I had lost the three closest to me, as though it were said, "Now you must face the future unaided."

I had spent this year learning to accept my fate, and I felt that no matter what happened, nothing could hurt me. Death meant reunion. Normal life as we had known it would never exist again. I was unable to take very

seriously the probable loss of material possessions. Their destruction would seem the natural accompaniment of the greater loss of John. I found it difficult to attach much importance to the division of property between Michael and me, which Tatus wished accomplished in his lifetime. Only in deference to Tatus' feelings, Michael and I read and signed papers which Tatus had prepared carefully, and in great detail. My mind was out the window, in the garden, I could hear the endless drone of the second maid, Bronia, talking to Andrew, like the comforting hum of a well-running engine. Though I could not distinguish the words, I could well imagine them.

"Now, Pan Andrzej is building a railroad, a railroad to Warsaw for his daddy and mummy to ride upon. Up the hill goes the railroad, and through the tunnel it goes, to Warsaw with his daddy and mummy riding on it. Into the station the train rolls like thunder, and out of the train jumps Pan Andrzej. He crosses the station and calls for an automobile, and away he rides, off to the house of his granny and granddaddy. Now Pan Andrzej rings the bell . . ."

The church bells across the street ring for the benediction, and there is the unusual clatter of hurrying steps on the sidewalks, of gates banged shut, of rustling skirts and muffled greetings. High in the sky above us the ever circling planes guard us from German marauders. When the engines backfire, it makes us gasp. Everyone thinks, "This is war. They are firing." Then the comforting even roar of the motor whirring away brings peace once more, and an inner apology at having been frightened. What has Tatus been saying? Something about the picture collection — the great Matejko in the salon, and the Giermskis and Falats. Neither Michael nor I can conceive of a future with a salon big enough to house such pictures.

Timidly, not to hurt Tatus' feelings, Michael, said, "I think your collection of Michałowski should be left to the nation, and the other pictures too."

"Yes, do," I begged. "Just put aside small personal things for Andrew."

Tatus passed his hand over his poor tired brow. "What will you do with this furniture — the clocks and bronzes and wall hangings?"

"Everything in this room could be left to the Wawel. You know how often the director has been hinting to have them"

"I will have to think about it," Tatus said wearily. "Now, pay attention, while I read you the list of actions and hypotheks. Two thousand shares of Sukrovnia, two thousand Bank Polski, twenty-five thousand First Pozyczka Amerykanska, fifty thousand Second Pozyczka," etc , etc

When he had finished reading, he took off his glasses and handed each of us a copy of the hand-written account.

"Please," I begged, "let's not actually divide anything just yet."

"The law exacts it."

"We can carry out the legal requirements. Still, surely Michael feels as I do. He wouldn't touch a penny of Mulka's money."

"Let's not go over that again. Since Mulka died without testament, the money goes to the next generation."

"Surely, privately, we can do as we choose."

Michael whispered, "If there is a war, then nothing matters anyway. If not, by the end of the year we'll persuade Tatus."

Was Tatus' eagerness a pose? Did he imagine we would ever actually come into this property? Surely he must see the impending disaster. To be finished with the business I was willing to agree to any project, and, knowing Tatus' scrupulous exactitude, to sign any agreement. I longed to drive out of Cracow to lie down on a soft meadow and smell the sweet herbs, to gaze across the fields towards the pink brick spires of the Gothic churches that crown the city. Andrew would run in the grass and gather the flowers, while I would try to make my mind blank in the peace of the moment.

As we came out of Tatus' room, Andzia was holding a telegram, saying, "I did not know whether I should disturb you. Is the lady's sister any better?"

In the telegram it was written that my sister had died that morning.

"Poor Madame."

"You poor darling!"

"*Moja Kochana.*"

But still I could not believe it. Michael said, "Let's walk up the Kopiec, from the steep side. The way I took Elizabeth up when she was in Cracow. We can make plans while we are walking."

When we returned it was settled that I should leave to visit my parents in America. We would find a suitable companion in Warsaw for it was nine years since I had made the trip. If no one could be found, then Michael would bring me across. Leaving Andrew in Cracow until his nurse came back from her vacation, we took the evening train to Warsaw.

There was a young couple from California on the train who were touring every country of Europe on a two weeks' trip. Could it be that we were compatriots? They made me feel so shy and embarrassed, that I huddled into my corner and let Michael do the talking. I thought, "Will all Americans seem so strange and incomprehensible? Is environment really stronger than blood?" I had completely lost the habit of being satisfied with picking up odd facts and thinking I knew something about a question. Knowledge had become a long and serious process on whose outer periphery I stood. I knew few persons with whom I would venture an opinion. All our companions had too much respect for facts to play with them, and think they knew the answers. Then there was the custom of each American battling independently for his own position. How bare and lonely a life, that is not fully shared with a large circle of friends and family! In America I might be safe from physical danger but I would be consumed with lonely anguish and sorrow.

CHAPTER 18

I WAS to have spent the whole month of September in Warsaw, but one morning at eight o'clock Halcia telephoned. She had just heard over the radio that Chamberlain was flying to Munich.

"Czechoslovakia will surely fight," she said, "and Poland will support her. You must leave for the United States at once, for today may be your last chance to travel."

"The British can't give in," we both agreed. "This means war." However, I hesitated, being unprepared to depart so suddenly.

"Telephone one of your friends in the Embassy!" Halcia urged. "They will know whether the Czechs are mobilizing."

The Embassy told me to go at once. While pulling a few clothes from my closet, I made a plan of order for the day — tickets, visas, money — all must be obtained in five hours. When Michael came down for breakfast, I told him what I had learned and added, "I'm leaving for Italy on the 3.30 train this afternoon."

"You can't possibly travel without a maid," he protested.

"How could I get a passport for Wladzia?" Our chambermaid had left her birth certificate in the country. "I'd rather go alone than face travelling with that old governess."

"Padowski will arrange it," Michael reassured me.

This was our by-word. Our Administrator had never failed to arrange anything yet. Agreeing, "If Padowski can fix it by two!" I hurried out to be at the bank when it

opened at nine. Padowski went at once to the Chief of Police to ask for a passport for Wladzia. An hour and a half later, while I was still in line at Cook's, Padowski appeared, his face as completely enigmatic as always.

"What's the outcome?"

"You have only to sign a paper that you aren't taking Wladzia away to exploit her, and promise you will bring her back. I am to supply all necessary documents after you have left."

"So it's three tickets!"

The clerk informed us that the three tickets could not be given out until the appropriate visas had been stamped on our passports. We hailed a taxi and dashed first to the Italian, then to the German and lastly to the Czechoslovakian Consulates. Because of the crisis, none of these countries would grant us a visa unless we could show the permit to enter the adjoining country.

Back in the taxi, Padowski reminded me of the signed orders I must leave him, without which the estate could not be run in my absence. We agreed that he would type them up during the half hour we would have at home, that I could read them on the way to the train, and sign them at the station.

In the front hall several large heavy portmanteaux were ready. Andrew's heaviest toys and bedding occupied two, and the maid had stuffed a third with her own sheets and towels. The man at Cook's had been dubious as to whether the train would run through and had advised taking only the lightest handbags. I therefore had to empty out the bags and pack afresh though we had only twenty minutes left. The little maid had lost her head in the joyous prospect of traveling, and was running about the house telling everyone that only a fairy princess could equal her good fortune.

"Put on your suit," I commanded sternly, to bring her from her dreams. "Fetch me your uniforms, your underwear and a handbag."

I went into the drawing room and into John's study to say good-bye. I knew better than to pick up little souvenirs.

My throat felt stiff and hot at leaving the books, five thousand and eighty, all neatly catalogued. But even if I had been able to take them and my furniture and pictures with me, it would not have eased the pain of leaving Poland.

When John and I had played the game of "What to take first in a fire," he always chose the Madonna his grandfather had taken to Siberia, and his great-grandfather before him to the Napoleonic Wars. But a fire destroys only a few individuals, while others escape. In this war, wherever we were, the fire would come to consume us, and no one would escape.

When we reached the station, Uncle Anthony and his family were anxiously waiting apart from the other friends who had come to say good-bye, each with a few flowers or a little box of chocolates.

"How did you know I was leaving?" I asked in bewilderment. "Who told you?"

"We were so worried you would miss your train!" was all they said. "God knows when we will see each other again."

"Why did you leave the office at this hour?" I demanded, well knowing the difficulties involved.

"Could I let you leave without saying good-bye?" They repeated one after the other, urging me on to the train.

I reached Uncle Anthony and his family who clutched at me, yet pushed me aboard. "Most beloved — good-bye," was all they said. Wozteck put a basket in Andrew's hands. "Yes, for Andrew." They were standing by the compartment window, speechless, as if to imprint their last loving looks in my soul.

Padowski humbly tugged my arm. "The signatures, please."

"Read them over, Michael, to see if they are properly worded."

"Yes, surely. Yes."

"Perhaps you better sign them," Michael suggested. "If something is not in order, I will keep it until your return."

The brakemen were waving their lanterns. Michael and Padowski dashed for the door, and slowly, so smoothly that I

did not feel it, the train started. Michael ran along the platform beside the car. "Good-bye. God bless you," he called, as the train pulled away. Though I was staring at the new tunnel through which we were running, before my eyes were the blurred and well-known faces, and I could still feel the pressure of their hands — until Andrew's squeals of delight as he threw the contents out of the basket broke the contact, and life in Warsaw was over.

* * * * *

On arriving in America, I was very much bewildered. I heard people speak as angrily of Mr. Chamberlain as if they personally had been betrayed, and yet I never met anyone who felt American should fight to save Czechoslovakia.

"The British Empire is at stake," I was told.

"Will America join in?" I inquired

"Why should we fight?" was the inevitable reply.

"The British are unprepared. If they fought and lost, the United States would be in a desperate situation," I tried to explain.

"Why aren't the British ready? They ought to have realized —"

"Are the Americans preparing? Do they realize?"

I felt distinctly uncomfortable at this idle recumination, expecting others to do what you yourself had no intention of doing. When the meeting at Munich was followed by the anti-climax of the Czechoslovakian surrender, I decided to return to Poland forever. The United States seemed foreign indeed.

Tatus had written me every day. From his letters it was clear how much he missed me. His letters were all alike, simple everyday things which showed how intimately our lives were intertwined.

"My beloved Dorothy :

Nothing new at home. Stopped in to see Mrs. Rice for a few minutes after Mass at Bishop G's this morning. Her children are in the country. Yesterday we picked twelve kilos of pears for the

winter. Andzia preserved seven litres of peaches for you. Professor N. sent me two trout from his hatcheries. It is extraordinary : after cleaning the dogs every day for a month, they still have a few fleas. Weather remains foggy. Slight frosts at night. Picked the last Richmond roses. When are you returning ?"

I returned after Christmas. A supernatural calm hung over the city. The only outward signs of preparation for war were the colored cartoons pasted up on every building. These looked like a page from the comics. In graphic picture language, the public were instructed what to do in case of attack by air. First the enemy plane dumps its bombs, while onlookers stand in the street. Second people scatter in all directions for home. Third they seize blankets from the bed, fourth they soak them in water, and fifth, nail them to the tops of the windows. Picture six shows a bomb bursting in the street, and gives the angle of inflection. Concussion destroys the upper floors, the lower remain intact. Someone is wounded, and a shelf is shown, on which are the bottles of iodine, aspirin and bandages which every housewife should have. At the end were the instructions : "Keep off the streets. Use the lower floors of the houses."

Michael had begun taking an extensive lecture course, as he was the chief fire warden for our street. He went every evening at six, and it was always after nine when he returned. He was taught how to fight incendiary bombs with sand and shovel. He had to organize the street, and instruct assistants from each of the neighboring houses. Our janitor also went to lectures every day at the police station, he became an assistant policeman. He was to see that everyone observed the black-out and kept the heavy wet blankets over the windows as a protection against flying glass and poison gases. It would be his duty to stand in the street and bury the incendiary bombs Michael was to toss him from the roof.

Anielka, Zulcia, Halcia and all my other women friends were attending Red Cross classes. They were instructed to set up dressing stations in their own apartments, since the hospitals would be overcrowded, dangerous targets.

During the late afternoon they dropped in for tea.

"Why did you come back?" each asked rather crossly. "Children should be kept out the city. They will only be in the way. You should take your child and leave while you can."

"I have only just returned," I protested, "I feel more at home in Warsaw than in the United States."

"If you decide to stay, you take a great responsibility, unless you can make yourself useful in some organization. This is no time for sentimental emotion."

"Even if you could be helpful, you should consider Andrew."

"Think what you could do for us in America."

"No one believes what I say in America. Poland has a very bad Press." To prove it, I pulled out a recent copy of *Life* magazine. It pictured some ragged country children playing near a duck pond against a background of old tumble-down thatched barns. It was intimated that these were houses, and suggested that most of Poland was Feudal, owned by a few rich aristocrats, and governed by a ruthless military clique.

"That's so ridiculous it's funny," they all laughed. "Anyone who can check figures should know it was not true."

"Americans read newspapers. They don't check figures." I tried to explain that no American journalist had ever spent more than a week in Poland and yet without having learned the language, or checked statistics, had written numerous articles about us.

Our conversation was interrupted by the ringing of the front door bell.

"More cups," I called to Edward as he went to answer it.

It was our family doctor, Dr. Bergson. Since John's death he had tried to help me more with good advice than with medicine.

"I learned in town you had returned. You never even telephoned."

"I've only been back three days, yet everyone is trying to get rid of me."

"We would not wish to see you leave, but you must understand how heavy the food problem will be."

"I brought back six boxes of vitamins for Andrew!"

"Think what you could do for us in America!" the doctor exclaimed.

"That is just what we have been trying to tell her," the others echoed in chorus.

"There is nothing I could do for you in America," I said desperately.

"You could tell American Jews that we Polish Jews are standing by Poland," the doctor suggested.

"I don't know what you mean."

"You will see in America," he said prophetically, "German Jews who are actually pro-German because they think of Hitler as only a transitory phenomenon in the super-German State." His tone was bitter. "Among German Jews are the most implacable enemies of Poland."

We stirred uneasily, embarrassed by this glimpse into what we imagined was a family quarrel.

"If the American Jewish bankers would back us," he went on, "we could still stop Hitler, but many of them have actually made loans to Germany."

"Then Polish Jews feel closer to Polish Gentiles than to German Jews?"

"The educated ones do, surely. As for the Orthodox I cannot speak for them. I feel really uncomfortable when I am called on a case by an orthodox Jew. They have no conception of our ideas of hygiene, and we have so many difficulties over ritualistic food and other things with them in the hospital."

Anielka, Halcia and Zulcia stood up to leave.

"May I stay?" Dr. Bergson asked. "I don't disturb you?"

"Indeed, stay for dinner," I begged.

When they had gone, he said with some embarrassment, "My girls, you know, went to Miss Landowska's school. They want to become Catholics. That is all right for them — to be like all their friends. But if I followed them, every-

one would say that I was making a last minute effort to escape."

It was difficult to find the right answer.

"Don't care what people think. It's what you believe," I said.

"If I had joined ten years ago, before religion became a public issue," he remarked wistfully. "Nothing is private any more. The most sacred rights — religion and democracy are jeered and spat upon by the dictators."

We sat in silence, while I thought over what he had said.

"In your innermost self do you feel more Polish or Jewish?"

"Certainly more Polish. I feel at home with Poles. Most of my patients are Polish. The free patients are Jews. My whole career is lost if Poland falls."

"Are there many who feel as you do?"

"All my acquaintances. Of Jews from Russia I have no experience . . . they keep to themselves! But Polish-Jewish professional men, intellectuals, bankers, industrialists," he said earnestly, "such Jews are solidly behind the Government. We are Poles."

Suddenly he began reciting, "*W glebinie syberyjskich rud* — In deepest Siberian mines — ." He spoke as if enchanted, and as if the poem dissolved him in a trance.

I sat spellbound. . . "*Gdy sie Judaszem galaz oberwala sucha* — When the hanging Judas with the dry branch fell — "

"What is it?" I murmured, fearing to break the mood.

"Poems of Tuwim, translations of Puszkın. You don't know them? Please, then, let me send you the volume. I want you to have it from me." He pulled his watch out of his pocket, looked at it mechanically, kissed my hand and said, "I know I've stayed too long. You will pardon me? Good night."

It was after midnight when he had gone. I wandered from room to room wondering what to take with me if I should really leave. Mechanically I pulled out the drawers of John's desk and sorted the letters that had collected while

I was away. The piles of books standing on the floor, I replaced on the shelves in proper order. I was still no nearer the answer, "what to take?" I tried sensibly to imagine myself in the two or three small rooms of a New York apartment, — a small table, a few chairs, a little rug ; the utilitarian objects that would be necessary.

CHAPTER 19

ANDREW and I had been invited to spend the 3rd of May holiday with the Minister of Communications, Mr. Ulrich and his wife. We were to have taken the children for an all-day picnic at our favorite spot by the river Bug, but at the last moment the Minister fearing to be the whole day away from the telephone, invited us to lunch in his private apartment. So now Andrew and I walked down the quiet brick walk at the rear of the towering new building of the Department of the Interior. In the flower beds that bordered the walk, daffodils were still blooming and the roses, which formed garlands between the dwarf lilacs had feathery new leaves. Thick young grass glowed blue-green even in the shade. The little walled garden had a monastic, peaceful privacy in spite of the gigantic modernistic building at its side, and the Minister's door at the end of the walk was unobtrusively tucked away. The stairway up to his apartment was sheathed in wood and hung with *kilims* in the Polish manner, but his immense private office had been arranged by a decorator in harmony with the new style of the building. His fine old Empire desk and side chairs were stiffly silhouetted against the apple green velvet hangings, and a group of heavy upholstered chairs was arranged about a low glass table.

"What are they saying of Beck's address to Parliament?" he asked at once, as I came in.

"Everyone is glad of his unequivocal attitude towards Germany."

"We Poles make a cult of fearlessness," his voice was bitter.

"What else can people do?"

"Make more preparation !" he fairly bellowed.

"They are buying whatever the Government tells them to. They don't want to 'sow panic' by hoarding."

"Sow panic ! Does it help to leave all the art treasures for the Germans to destroy ? Why don't people build underground vaults to hide their most valued objects ?" I laughed uneasily.

"I speak in earnest. It does not add to valor that all our priceless rugs, all our ancient documents and modern libraries should be left unprotected against bombing and burning. Everyone who can leave the city should do so now and establish himself in the country "

"One cannot conceive of bombing beforehand nor feel imaginary pain. The public draws strength while it can," I said, trying to excuse my many friends engaged in usual daily occupations out of an effort not to undermine their morale by fear and brooding. Those who had lived through the last war were the most intrepid.

"It 's not for lack of appreciation of danger," I continued, thinking that because of his cabinet position the Minister was too far from the pulse of the people. "Take old Mrs. Morawska," I said, "during the last war she escaped to Kiev to be behind the fighting line only to be caught up in the Bolshevik revolution and to see many of her relatives shot."

"Just the same, those who can should leave. You should go at once."

"At once ? Surely the Germans won't begin before August. Everyone is agreed they will wait for harvest to be gathered."

"If you have decided to go, what do you gain by remaining ?"

"Countess George Potocka, (the wife of the Polish Ambassador in Washington) wants to rent my apartment for the summer."

"Splendid, only do not rent it furnished ; take everything with you "

Impossible, I thought to myself, but aloud I murmured something about expense.

"What will you do with the things you intend to leave here? Do not be as foolhardy as the Poles!"

"I couldn't hurt my family here by running out on them."

The Minister spoke harshly, "Does no one understand what war is? The Germans will take away everything when they come. This is a war of extermination — Hitler has already said so." His vehemence withered my hopes and blasted away all illusion of safety. In an instant that broad, sunny and seemingly endless plain that stretched so safely to the distant frontier shrank and narrowed before my eyes. What could I say? I felt ashamed at my childishly eager naiveté.

"Why doesn't the Government tell the truth?" I echoed.

"The public wouldn't believe us. Everyone loves the newspaper stories of unrest, of food shortage and apathetic morale in Germany, of the superiority of Polish troops. All such stories give an illusion of safety. Unfortunately, an honest warning would play into Germany's hands."

"How?"

"By discouraging resistance. I even believe the Nazi originated those stories of ersatz cannon and sabotage in factories so that the public will underestimate German strength. If Government officials would say as much, we would be accused of being pro-German."

A cold shiver went down my spine. I was one of those very people who believed that because the individual Polish soldier could endure great hardship, he would in some mysterious fashion hold back the German tanks, with his little machine gun hidden under a mud bank, until England and France attacking Germany in the rear would come to his rescue.

"The whole nation is behind the Government's preparations now and every man, woman and child will resist the invader," I pleaded. "Take Lepkowski's small brick factory. It runs three shifts daily and Sundays. His men proposed giving one day's labor if he would give one day's profit for the aviation fund."

"My dear lady, we can't buy the planes either in England or France. You heard Minister Rose that night at your house

just after he had come back from London. It's not even a question of a few planes. It's the question of the whole supply system. The British won't give us even the promise of supplies for fear we will become 'overbearing' and 'provoke' the German government!"

A secretary, who had placed papers on his desk several times during our conversation, now asked the Minister if he would speak on the telephone.

"Connect me here," he said.

I quickly went into the next room. Madame Ulrich who was helping the maid set the table, put the jardiniere of ferns on the table. The children's voices rang merrily from across the hall and I was impressed once more by the informality and lack of servants in this cabinet minister's apartment.

The Minister was so preoccupied during dinner, that his conversation kept shifting between reminiscences of the last war and comments upon each of several further telephone calls which interrupted the meal. He had been incarcerated, together with Pilsudski, at Magdeburg by the Germans. While he was telling us how they spent their long prison days, the telephone brought news of two new incidents at the Danzig border. A German automobilist had demanded the right to cross the Corridor without entrance visa, and had never reappeared on the opposite side. A man on foot, like several thousand other Germans that spring, had demanded a similar right, and had then disappeared into Poland without further trace. Because of the Polish-Danzig treaty, any German could cross that part of Poland at will. Had the Polish frontier guards prevented them, the German government would have made of the incident a "casus belli."

"Over a month ago we offered them an elevated express highway across Poland into East Prussia, but that is not what they want," the Minister said, "and every day of peace further undermines our position."

For the first time I realized the wheel of fate was out of control. I had imagined like everyone else that the firmness of our ministers was our protection in stopping the storm. In Austria, Holland, France and England, even many

of the aristocracy had gone over to Fascism saying, "No use bucking the modern world." But in Poland I knew no one who did not hold to the old-fashioned belief that "there were things worth dying for" which is perhaps why they did not build "that little house out in the country for the day of the revolution." They were calm because they had taken the great decision to fight. They believed therefore that though Hitler might bluster and threaten, their adamant position would be their protection.

When the Minister said, as I was leaving, "Good-bye, I hope you won't put off your departure," I replied in the words I had heard repeated a hundred times, "Hitler is only bluffing ; he knows the Poles will fight so he is trying to get the French and British to put pressure on Poland to give up the forts around Danzig, the way he got the forts in the Sudeten Mountains. Since we won't give in without a war, he will have to go down the Danube, and if there is a war the whole world will be in it, so there is no use in running away."

"There will be more food in America."

"But America will be in the war."

"Granted !"

"Then why leave home, friends and relatives to jump into another fire ?"

"I wouldn't advise you to go if you had no family there."

The chorus began singing in my ears, *Go away, go away, you can't be useful here. Go away, each has his part to play, you can't be useful here.*

All day long friends came to say good-bye. No sooner would my head be deep in one of the capacious trunks, in which I was packing linens and woollens, than I would be called away. As soon as I had decided to leave everyone knew it. Yet I always asked in amazement, "How did you know I was going ?"

"You are, aren't you ?" would be the reply. "Please take this letter to my uncle in America. Tell him not to worry, we will live through it."

Again the telephone bell would ring. "I called because I heard you were leaving."

"Not yet," I would say, ashamed at appearing to run away.

"Don't put it off," they would advise, as if to stiffen my will. "No one ever knows, and once you have decided —"

"I won't be going for a month at least," I would reply, putting off that horrid moment as long as possible.

"Is that prudent?"

Then the door bell would ring. "Excuse my coming so late, I heard you were leaving and wanted to give you this scrap of material from the dress of Saint Theresa to keep you safe on your journey" My friend held me tight as if to emphasize in the all embracing power of love — the heavenly protection of Saint Theresa.

"How can I thank you?" I muttered humbly.

"It will take no space and is better than flowers, isn't it?" she said as gaily as if she were giving me a trinket.

"What will you do?" I asked, appalled by the sudden realization of how vulnerable she would be. She had worked in the office of the Chief of Staff of Aviation, and the Germans would certainly try to extract information from her.

"I am waiting for mobilization, and then I am to go to a secret airport. None of us know where it is."

"And Alfred?" I asked.

"He is in the Reserve Officers Corps, doing three months' intensive training"

"If only I could stay!" I cried out

"Don't even consider it," she said gently. "But if you are caught in Warsaw, come to us in the country. You will be safer there and nearer the frontier."

Once more the telephone was ringing. "Hello."

"My brother tells me that you are leaving," the voice said. "Could you take a letter to my sister? I'll mail it to you, we are very busy preparing my son for the army."

"Will they conscript him?" I thought the boy was far too young.

"He has volunteered, of course, he is nearly eighteen."

"How terrible for you!" I thought, having only just lost her husband. . . .

"We Polish mothers must expect to give our sons," she said firmly. "We cannot hope to have an easy, happy life." She asked for no pity and permitted no sharing of her deep felt suffering.

I was so abashed I mumbled when I said, "Good-bye."

That night voices kept me from sleeping, "*You're going, don't tarry.*" . . . "*Go while you can go in peace, it's not cowardice to go when you have a child.*" . . . "*This is our business.*" . . . "*You've no place here.*" . . . "*Go where you can be of more help!*"

I sat up in bed. It was still night. Outside I could see streaks of light shooting up into the sky where the search lights were sweeping. Overhead the solid roar of planes, broken by the familiar backfire of bombers swooping down in their night practice, magnified those voices that would not let me sleep. I crept to the window to lean my cheek on the cool glass pane. The damp summer wind was sweet with lilacs — the lilacs in Warsaw. Could spring anywhere else be half so sweet! Lilacs and lilies-of-the-valley soften the meanest courtyards.

How could I pull my heart up by the roots and go away? Other lands might shine more fair but none could hold this distilled sweetness. I closed the window to shut out the fresh night air, whose soft fragrance recalled a thousand scenes and memories. But I could not close my mind and tuck it away like a photograph album on a shelf. Memories came tumbling upon me in a nightmare jumble. . . Driving home at dawn in a horse cab snuggled under John's great-coat to be warm. . . Dawn just breaking and myriads of sparrows chirping in the leafless trees. . . The sound of distant horse hoofs on a far-off pavement. . . The splash of water and muffled commands of the men who washed the pavements. . . A man's voice, singing "As long as I live, Poland will not die!" . . . The first spring bunch of violets and John's pale face as I brought him home upon the stretcher.

I ran out of my room. Racing up the stairs, I knocked at Michael's door until I roused him to come and open it.

"What's happened? What is it?"

"I can't sleep, Michael. I can't make up my mind to go away. Please say you think I should stay. Please tell me not to leave. Please, please!"

The insistence in my voice waked Michael instantly. I knew he would not say, "Go back to sleep, there's a good girl, we'll talk it over in the morning." He would try no easy consolation, he would show no surprise at being wakened.

"Go, get in my bed. You are cold," was what he said.

Opening his cupboard, he took out his heavy blue wool bathrobe with the thick tassels and braid in scrolls, and putting a steamer rug around his knees, he chose a comfortable chair, prepared to stay up for the rest of the night if need be.

"I can't leave," I said, "I'd rather die here if there is going to be a war."

"That's not like you. What about Andrew?"

"Suppose there is no war?"

"Then you will come back in the autumn. But the situation looks very gloomy. The world seems to be filled with only two kinds of people, those moved by egoism and hatred, and those whose only concern is to avoid responsibility."

"Not here in Poland?"

"No, the way people take it here is rather comforting."

"Everyone has kept his head."

"Because, if we are to have a war, we'll have one. Still, even the pleasantest way of approaching a war is pretty poor consolation. If it comes, everything, including us, will be blown to bits rather thoroughly. And there isn't much to look forward to since no one can believe the 1914 stories that this would be 'the last war' before the millennium. . ." He paused.

"Then you do think war is inevitable."

"No, no. But I do think we are in for a period of everyone preparing for war. Everything else will be suspended. That isn't a happy prospect."

"They won't stop you building and doing whatever it is you do out at Piaski."

He picked up *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* which was on his bed table, and opened it saying, "Do you remember the concluding chapter ? The Abbess accepted the fact that it was of no importance whether her work went on or not. It was enough to work. She was the nurse who tends the sick who never recover. She was the priestess who perpetually renews the office before an altar to which no worshipers come. After her death her work would relapse into the indolence and indifference of her colleagues. It seemed to be sufficient for Heaven that, for awhile in Peru, a disinterested love had flowered and faded."

It was my turn to wait for him to speak.

"That's the situation in Poland. Nobody seems to want any of the things we could do. It certainly is little use building something that will in all probability be reduced to dust in the immediate future."

"That doesn't seem an adequate reason why I should leave."

"What could you do by staying here ? I only keep active now out of a kind of fear of inactivity, or something of the kind."

"Michael !"

"Still I believe that every life or death is for a purpose, that we should push on as best we can, even if we don't know what will remain of it or what the purpose is under the circumstances. Do you remember the last words of the book : 'Love, the only survival — the only meaning' ?"

"Yet you advise me to leave the country that I love, the people that I love, and the obligations I have undertaken ?"

"Try to imagine this house being blown to bits ; the city with no food nor water, money, if you had it, could buy you nothing ! Then you would not be able to execute the most elementary of your obligations. You would not be able to take care of Andrew, much less help any of us. Take just a few things for the emergency and go to America. If war

comes, it will be after harvest. If war does not come this year, return in October."

"I will do as you suggest."

"Then let us go for steamship tickets tomorrow and not put it off. If you need money, I could lend you a thousand dollars. While you are away I will attend to everything until you come back. You know I will do the best I can."

"I know you will. I won't try to thank you. Is it time enough if we take the tickets for passage in a month, so I can get in a visit to Cracow before I leave?" I asked, and standing, stretched and yawned at last.

"Do you think you can sleep now? Don't feel you must hurry," Michael said with his affectionate smile, always tinged with sadness.

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Once it was settled I was to leave Warsaw, I called the Countess Potocka to tell her that she could have my apartment for the summer. I would begin packing immediately, and in ten days I would leave for Cracow.

I had decided to drive down to Cracow in the Buick and leave it there, hoping that Tatus would use it while I was away. Besides, leaving Warsaw by car lacked the sense of finality of the lugubrious leaving by train, the tearful good-byes on the platform and the compartment full of flowers. The car could wait while the last-minute search about the house was in progress, and a last-minute telephone call was answered. But when we were finally ready, it was four o'clock and the trip had to be put off till the next day. The extra evening was like a reprieve. The heart-breaking farewell visits had been paid with Aunt Emily and Aunt Lola; it has been a good-bye, forever! Michael and I would spend this evening with Uncle Anthony.

We ran up the familiar stairs without waiting for the elevator. Long ago when I first came to Poland I had railed against walking down. Now I even loved running upstairs like any Pole. Though Uncle Anthony's door was opened by their sloppily dressed maid, the whole family had crowded

into the hall to meet us.

I remembered that first visit — the children in their very best clothes — the well-rehearsed English greeting and the hum and bustle behind closed doors. Now I was one of the family and Zosia who had recently married, quickly drew me into her own bedroom for the usual exchange of whispered confidences.

"Jas telephoned — he will be here immediately," she began. Jas, her new husband, was a geographical economist. While she showed me some linen napkins which she was about to embroider with the coats of arms of the principal Polish cities, she continued her chatter. "Oh, such good news! Do you remember Bronia? She was at my wedding — she married secretly during Christmas vacation while skiing in the mountains! She's going to have a baby! The tests from the pharmacist were positive! She's much older than I, she will be nineteen in August. Today Wojtek received a prize for the essay he wrote on English Geography, a beautifully bound book about English Cathedrals. Mother and Wojtek can read it. When we all meet in the autumn you will see how much I have learned! Father always says 'Do one thing at a time not to get in a jumble.' *Kochana* (dearest) — do you think I will get pregnant now? I've waited so long. It's over four months since I was married. Mother says I must go to the country and rest all summer, but poor Jas will have to work at the Institute. If we don't get a baby we are going skiing next Christmas. You will come with us, won't you — *Kochana*!"

"Why does Dorota hide in Zosia's room," Uncle Anthony called out jovially from the dining room. "It's time she joined us."

"Dorota hasn't seen my book yet," Wojtek shouted from his room.

"*Zaras, zaras* (immediately)," I replied. "You see, I have not been polite," I told Zosia, getting up off the couch. Her room was stacked with the accumulations of the twenty years Uncle Anthony and Aunt Anita had been married. When Zosia moved into her own apartment, this room had been left

exactly as it had been, the dolls and toys of her childhood pushed back to make room for the books, bric-a-brac and letters of her adolescence. Her bed was piled with sewing materials and clothes, some to be discarded, others to be mended.

Nothing had been changed in the house. There was the same untidy stack of overcoats in the hall, the same last-minute bustle over dinner, the same whispered consultations in the dining room after which Zosia, as on every other occasion, ran to ask her father for money. I watched him mechanically pull coins from his pocket which he held out for her to choose while he continued his conversation without a break.

As soon as she was gone Uncle Anthony led us to the library, and began at once questioning Michael, whom he had seen in the city, what they had said. Then he discussed the changes in the University, how this pupil had received a Rockefeller scholarship, and that one had gone to France. As in the past Uncle Anthony avoided generalities. It was hard to keep my mind on what was being said. I thought I had never seen a room that changed less in fourteen years. The old palm which had outgrown the room, had been exchanged by the Botanic Society for an identical smaller plant. But everything else stood where it had always been.

"Why do you look so sad?" Zosia asked, coming in and sitting on the arm of my chair.

"This may be the last time I sit here."

"Nonsense!" she said swiftly, "it's wicked to speak that way." She put her arms about me and gave me a warm hug. "Dorota is talking war scares," she said scornfully.

"You don't mean it!" everyone said in unison. "Now that England signed the treaty with us, the Germans won't dare."

I tried to speak patiently. "Even our own Polish Cabinet Ministers know it is inevitable. Everyone I have spoken with says we should prepare for the worst."

"I've bought just what the Government told me, a hundred pounds of sugar, fifty pounds of soap, candles and a first aid kit. What else do you advise one to do?" Aunt Anita

asked seriously.

"Let's talk of more cheerful things," Zosia interrupted. "Can we count on you to meet us in Italy in September? Would you trust Jas to drive your car down? We could meet the boat at Genoa and all go back to the Lido for two weeks. Then we could drive slowly home, stopping at every village in Piedmont. We don't have to be back until the first of October." Zosia continued chattering about inconsequential matters as if she were determined to make this last evening festive. "I always think of us being at the Lido together. Remember the bicycle trip —?"

From time to time I would surreptitiously glance at my watch, which seemed to stand still. Yet I loved this family beyond any other on earth and I knew they would all be hurt if I left before midnight. Habitually, Uncle Anthony never went to bed before two. Yet at eleven, pleading an early morning start for Cracow, I begged to be excused.

"You will promise then to come back to Italy in time for our holiday," Zosia repeated. "There won't be a stupid war! there can't be, with social conditions so bad in Germany! The Czechs ruined all the guns with sand and the shells are ersatz. Don't worry, everything will be alright and, if the Germans should march, we'll show them. That's why they don't dare! Isn't it true?"

No one dared deny what she had said, and there was silence as I stood up. It was so much easier to say good-bye if it was only for the summer as usual.

"Write me in care of Janek in July," Zosia said gaily. "We are going to Dambrowa in August, then we'll all meet in Italy during the first week of September! Is that a promise?"

"If there is peace, of course."

"Then it's a promise! Good-bye and God bless you."

It was good-bye.

I had said it so lightly. Yet Michael and I could find no light comfortable words as we walked home along the silent street; still in spite of the distant drone of planes, caught like moths in the searchlight beams which cut the sky in a dozen paths of light. Occasionally, a taxi would tear by, breaking

only for a moment the deep tranquility of the sleeping city.

In the circles cut out of the pavement around the trees, pansies and newly set out geraniums smelled sweet in the gentle night air. Tubs of vines and oleanders flanked the doorways of the tobacconist open at that late hour. As we crossed the Aleja the young leaves on the tall clipped beaches looked emerald green in the arclight.

"I'm feeling morbid and sad. I've left so often before. Why should I feel worse this time? It is a comfort nothing ever happens as you imagined it"

As Michael did not reply, we walked on in silence. In nearly every house we passed lived someone I knew. The very streets emanated that warm and comfortable feeling of great familiarity. There were few outward visible changes during the fourteen years, though every year had seen new window boxes filled with flowers. Then plaster on the buildings was crumbling away. Now the scars left from the other war were neatly repaired and repainted. These were the very apartments that had been sub-divided for half a dozen families, when I had first come to Warsaw. Now no one rented rooms. The former tenants had either bought or built, or returned to the country. In spite of hard times, a sense of comfort hung over all.

Driving to Cracow, the country on either side of the newly opened pink and white cut granite highway seemed clad in holiday attire. Poland, like an altar, was decked in flowers. In every hamlet, before every crossroad shrine, every house and central square, homely bouquets of flowers were reverently placed. The many small towns through which I passed had been freshly painted during the spring cleaning. Young trees and flower beds were set out along newly paved streets. These very streets, when John and I last passed here, had been torn up to lay sewers and electric conduits.

For the past twenty years these villagers had toiled to reach a level of comfort and tidiness never dreamed of under Russian and German rule. For the first time country children everywhere wore leather shoes and dressed in white summer muslin. Babies were being rolled along the new sidewalks

in perambulators instead of carried in swaddling clothes on pillows. Motor trucks, crowding the highroad, drove milk to town. The women no longer carried milk on their backs. Bicyclists blocked traffic where pedestrians had thronged. Radio programs from England, Italy and Russia blared from every window. The "Palace Cinema" displayed bills from Hollywood. Well stocked shops neatly displayed provisions on white enamel counters gleaming through the brightly polished plate glass windows on either side of the street. Now all traces of the last war had been effaced.

Tears blinding my eyes made driving difficult. I thought of Michael's words, "Every life is for a purpose, we should push on as best we can even if we don't know what will remain of it, or what the purpose is under the circumstances." And I wondered, was it enough that Poland should flower for so short a time? Surely this could not be all that life had in store for these people, to have rebuilt their country, only to have it smashed again within two decades! Would the Polish example inspire other nations never to compromise for temporary gains? Would her steadfastness rally other peoples? Would she in the end become the spiritual leader her prophets had foretold?

Yet Poland stood alone. How sad it was no picturesque leader had made these people intelligible to the world at large. How many people still believed Poland was ruled by an autocratic military clique that should have been destroyed? Surely the nation's determined unity could belie this slur against her real democracy. It should be clear at last that Russia and Germany have covered their own imperialistic designs by implicating Poland. Yet many still believe Poland has German and Russian provinces and that these provinces ought to be restored. What can one individual say to correct this misconception? Surely in the end all will recognize this prevarication and abstract justice will prevail!

Poles knew they would have to die if Poland were to live. . . The enduring courage of her soldiers and her peoples, the untainted loyalty of the nation will prove how shallow its judgment has been. Surely her dauntlessness in the face of death will show the world what Poland is.

